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NEW ENGLISH REVIEW MAGAZINE

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VOLUME I. [NEW SERIES] NO. 1 SEPTEMBER 1948

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THE VOLUME I. No. 1.

NEW ENGLISH REVIEW MAGAZINE

Edited by DOUGLAS JERROLD

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SEPTEMBER COMMENTARY

TO-DAY, for the first time since the days of Pericles, Europe is not mistress of her own destiny. It is this harsh fact which makes the relations between this country and the United States of America of decisive importance and makes it appropriate that THE NEW ENGLISH REVIEW MAGAZINE, should in its first number report on the American political scene, the peculiarities of the United States constitution and the political and economic considerations which are likely to determine her foreign policy. Too many speak as if it were an open issue whether our policies should be harmonized with the United States. Whether we like it or not, the issue is not open. We must not be hypnotized by words. "We stood alone," we like to say, "after Dunkirk: why cannot we stand alone to-day?" We were never alone before or after Dunkirk. We could, indeed, have surrendered alone, but we could not have stood alone. It is even more important to realize that there was no road back from Dunkirk for Great Britain and France, for Belgium, Holland or Norway. There was only a hard road forward to a new and very different world in which the balance of forces is vastly changed and our power of independent initiative temporarily lost.

To proclaim this fact publicly is not to confess defeat but to take the first essential step forward in the battle to recover our position as a world power. For a few years at the most, and it may be only for a few months, arrangements between governments may ensure us assistance from the United States. Sooner rather than later, the time will come when that assistance will not be continued unless there has grown up a real understanding between peoples, and this must be based on a realized common interest. There is no other possible basis for a lasting understanding between peoples. Neither sentiment nor sympathy nor the recollection of a common heritage can take its place.

THIS essential condition of our peace and prosperity—the realization on both sides of the Atlantic of common interests which not only make the power and prosperity of the United States necessary to Britain but make the power and prosperity of Great Britain necessary to the United States—is very far indeed from

being fulfilled to-day. And the chief obstacles are our unwillingness to face the facts of our present situation and the grave doubts which exist across the Atlantic whether we really have the capacity to face them. The rich relation who has lost his money seldom gets much sympathy from the erstwhile poor relations whom in the past he has been inclined to patronize. When in addition to asking for sympathy he is forced to make continuous and ever increasing demands for cash, his popularity is apt to decline at an alarming rate. To win back the favour of his relations he has to do two things. He must convince them that he has reorganized his affairs with the intention of becoming solvent again, and that he has the capacity to give effect to his intentions.

Let us therefore as a nation cease once and for all asking for sympathy: let us instead remind ourselves why we are in our present position. These islands were able to sustain forty-five million people because they were the economic and financial centre of a great empire, carrying most of the world's trade and providing monetary and insurance services for five continents. We held this proud position for a century because our finances were stable, because we commanded the sea, because we had preserved the balance of power on the European continent and had been able to localize such conflicts as arose and to defend and sustain the neutral nations. Our most notable and historic service in this last respect was the defence of the Monroe Doctrine. The United States, in 1820, might and did declare that no European power should henceforth interfere in the policies of the American continent but it was the British fleet, and that alone, which made the declaration effective.

WE must never be ashamed of our century of power. In enriching ourselves we enriched the whole world and nothing is more false than the doctrine preached by so many socialist and liberal politicians that the wealth and prosperity we created went only to one class. For four generations the people of these small islands have been fed and could only have been fed in their vast numbers because of our income from overseas investments, from shipping, from insurance and other financial services. It is ignorant and pernicious to complain, as the socialists do, that we got rich in the process. It was our reserve of wealth—our savings, in other words—which armed our diplomacy and made firm our financial power. No nation can achieve security if it spends and spends at once every penny that it earns. It was the building up of great reserves of wealth which guaranteed, in the eyes of the world, both the security of our economy and the reality of our power. These guarantees preserved the peace of the world for one hundred years, from 1815 to 1914, years during which the way of life, the hopes and the prospects and opportunities of the common man were everywhere immeasurably improved. Although, however, we could not have remained powerful had we squandered the fruits of our prosperity, we must never forget that in the first instance our prosperity depended on our power and specifically on our command of the sea. We had to secure first that Europe was never dominated by one military power, for our

command of the sea and our seaborne trade would be—as we have learnt in blood and tears only recently—at the mercy of any hostile power occupying the North Sea and across the Channel ports. Secondly, we had to guard the world sea routes. For this purpose we had to live at peace with and to secure and maintain the independence of all those countries whose coasts border the narrow seas through which our vital sea communications lie. These twin conditions of our prosperity and power were destroyed at Dunkirk when the armies of a hostile power, devoted to an autarchic economy, swept us from the continent of Europe, occupied the Channel ports and closed the Mediterranean to our trade. Germany was later defeated and destroyed, but the price we have had to pay is a Europe militarily dominated as never before in history, not even from 1940 to 1942, by another hostile power with a rigidly closed economy. Further, in the course of five years of war our own economy has been disrupted. International trade is in ruins, we have lost our overseas investments and most of our shipping and, as a result, our military power is destroyed. We have the men, the ships and the air power but we lack the means to employ them. From the first shot in any war in which we might engage until the last we should have to be fed and financed by the United States. This means that, just at the time when the continent stands most in need of firm leadership, military guarantees and financial assistance from us, we are for the first time for four generations wholly unable to give any of these things.

WE can now see why a clear understanding of our present position and its causes is the first step to a permanent understanding between our peoples and those of the United States. The things which we cannot give to Europe to-day are precisely those things which the United States looks to us to give to Europe and it is in the expectation that we shall be able, with temporary assistance from them, to supply them once again that this country is to-day receiving the largest share of Marshall aid. Until we understand the American point of view in this matter there is a grave risk of increasing tension in our relations with the United States.

There is one school of thought who profess to see in the vast subsidies and loans which we have received, and are still receiving, from the United States an instrument of American power politics—a considered and clever effort aimed at the economic and political domination of the world. This school of thought is fortunately not influential, although its spokesmen are sufficiently vocal to do great harm to Anglo-American relations. Far more dangerous are those who wish to see in Marshall aid, as in the earlier "line of credit", a generous gesture to the brave people who "stood alone" in the dark days, something given essentially in return for past services and which therefore carried with it no political obligation. Among those who think—though the verb is hardly appropriate—in this way are many who wish to use the help of the United States to tide us over until a natural decline in the population, a great increase in emigration and increased food production at home

and in the Empire enable us, as they fondly hope, to balance our production and consumption and settle down into the position of a second-class power isolated from Europe and without any crippling responsibilities to the rest of the world. This foolish and ignoble view is not that of the present Government and most certainly not that of H.M. Opposition. It is, however, the view of a large section of the dying liberal party and the left-wing of the socialist party and will certainly be increasingly expounded by the fellow-travellers. It has sufficiently infected the present government to paralyse at the source any effective movement towards a united Western Europe and to prevent any effective organization of European defence.

THE tragedy of the present situation is that the true interests of this country and the realized and expressed interests of the United States are in complete harmony. We cannot fulfil the moral obligations implicit in Marshall aid unless we regain and re-assert our historic position as a great power. There is not the slightest substance in the prospect held out to us by the left-wing socialists of a life of ease and security as a second-class power which has sloughed off all its European and imperial responsibilities. It is contrary to all the laws of politics and all the lessons of history to imagine that Europe can in fact remain in a state of military and political disequilibrium, or that if Western Europe and the Mediterranean Countries remain dominated by the military power of Russia they will be able to retain their economic independence. Unless equilibrium is restored, the whole of Europe will be forced into the closed economy of Russia and this country will be faced with ruin. It is this certainty which sustains the fellow-travellers throughout Western Europe. Great Britain does not need to be conquered or even suborned. She has only to continue to do nothing for the destruction of her power to be accomplished.

It is the apparent failure of most people in this country to realize this fact which irritates, when it does not appal, most people in the United States. They see the reckless disorganization of our finances and the threat of nationalization hanging over our most vital productive industries just at the time when we should be husbanding our strength, curtailing all our unproductive expenditure, turning our people not by hundreds but by tens of thousands from government employment to productive industry and opening up the way to the restoration of international trade by validating our currency. Worse still, the United States looks, and looks so far in vain, for any sign of that dynamic leadership in Western Europe which we, who are a world power but also a European power, can alone supply. It is precisely because we are still a great colonial power and still are members of the British Commonwealth that we are the essential link between continental Europe and the western hemisphere, and it is because it is only through the restoration of the Western European economy that we can ourselves balance our accounts with the Americans that our interest and our duty coincide.

IT is the greatest single charge against Mr. Attlee's government that their improvident conduct of the national finances has shaken the confidence not only of the United States but of so many in our own country in our power of economic recovery. The disequilibrium caused by the loss of so much of our overseas investment income and by the reduction of our income from shipping insurance and kindred services can only be made good in part by increased exports. Full equilibrium will be achieved only through the medium of capital investments by the dollar countries in the sterling area. That is the natural and inescapable conclusion and only political follies can vitiate it. There is, in fact, no other path to equilibrium, and this means that a free economy in our own country is not merely politically and socially desirable but economically essential.

It is futile and highly disingenuous in the circumstances to pretend that the United States can or should be indifferent to the working out of our domestic political affairs when politics impinge on economics. Our politics are emphatically our own affair, and will be so regarded, but the policy of the United States cannot be unaffected by the decisions which will be taken by the British people at the next General Election. The ownership and direction of our public utilities is primarily a domestic matter. No doubt nationalization will add to the cost of such essential services as transport, light, heat and power, and the long-term effects of rising costs and diminished efficiency and of the slowing down of technical progress under the bureaucracy would be adverse to our recovery. But the deterioration will be gradual and its effects delayed. There is time for second thoughts and remedial measures. An electoral vote favouring the nationalization of any major section of our productive industry would be a different matter altogether. The door would be closed once and for all on Great Britain and her colonies as fields for foreign investment and with that, the possibility of any total recovery in this country and therefore the possibility of any effective Western European revival would be gone. These would be facts of which the United States would necessarily take note. There must be a greater awareness in this country of the immediacy and gravity of the choice before us if Anglo-American relations are to be on a wholly satisfactory footing.

THE French conception of a Third Force between the Communists and de Gaulle and Mr. Attlee's conception of an essentially British kind of socialism which can combine the advantages of centralized planning with the advantages of a free economy are both essentially empirical. They are conceptions determined by electoral opportunities; they are aimed at the retention of office by a group, not at the restoration of power to a nation. These policies are electorally attractive, because they appeal to those people, nowadays almost everywhere in a majority, who believe that there is an automatic process of evolution which dispenses those who are involved in the process from the necessity of making up their own minds. To resist change, such men feel, is to oppose the individual will to the natural law; to impose changes by force in advance of the natural process of evolution is an arrogant assumption of power. The wise man is he who collaborates with change.

It is only too easy to see how this doctrine, directly derived from the philosphers of the enlightenment, serves in the circumstances of our time to canonize the fellow-travellers and to tar with the fascist brush all who seek to restore a truly free economy. Neither Mr. Attlee nor the French socialists have any desire to tread the road to Moscow, but they are both being drawn along it. Men are in fact the masters, not the servants, of events and those who are not prepared to be masters of circumstance have no right to attempt the government of men. It is the loss of dynamism in Western Europe which threatens the historic civilization of the west with eclipse. The world will not be rebuilt by patient oxen, however solitary their stance as the floods engulf their world. The "little man" with his idiot grin and his appeasement-cry of safety first is the chief enemy to that Anglo-American solidarity on which our whole future depends.

IT is quite untrue to suggest that the politicians at Washington claim any right to dictate to the politicians at Westminster what they shall do or say. It is, however, clear that they will expect that our politicians shall say a great deal more clearly than they have done so far what in fact they intend or hope to do both about the reconstruction of the British economy and about the restoration of Western Europe. The present pattern of politics on the Continent, where we see a network of uneasy coalitions surviving by spending American dollars on bribing their respective electorates, is clearly not destined to last. If our conception of European recovery is merely to sustain other uneasy left-centre coalitions as long as possible we are embarked on a road which can only lead Europe to disaster. We can no more influence the electoral decisions of the continental countries than the United States can determine our own but we can work for the removal of certain essential matters such as tariffs, trade regulations, currency and defence, to an international, or at least a regional, level when long-term policies can be pursued without regard to changes of the balance of power between the different parties in each country. The United States had to solve this problem when she worked out her federal constitution, and Western Europe can also solve it. We ourselves must not only work for but achieve a clear definition of our own economic aims. The fact that we are a debtor country does not give any creditor the power to dictate what our internal policy shall be. It does, however, impose on us a moral obligation to determine and to state our own policy at home, and an indefeasible political obligation to pursue a foreign policy in accord with that of those powers who will have to underwrite it if it is to be effective. That is a regrettable necessity of our present position. As long as we refuse to face it, we shall continue to be distrusted. At present there is more than a suspicion that while we use the same words as the United States about the need for European economic and political unity we ourselves mean nothing more by our words than the promotion of a vague measure of European co-operation through the medium of periodical political conferences at which the representatives of a limited number of states will neither be asked to make any sacrifice of their independent sovereignty nor expected to bind themselves

to any long-term policy. If that is all that the present government mean, the sooner they leave office the better for the peace of the world.

THE British reaction to the proposed Anglo-American industrial council is typical of the very serious lack of realism in the British approach to our economic problem. The scheme as outlined by Sir Stafford Cripps may not be ideal ; it is, possibly, just arguable that British industrialists have nothing to learn from their American opposite numbers. What is absurd is the assumption that British capital and labour have nothing to learn from anyone. We are not paying our way, or anything like it: and we are not doing so because our production is inadequate, expensive and slow. We need to produce, if we are to maintain anything approaching our present standard of living, at a much lower real cost in man-hours and materials. For this we need, as the *Economist* has pointed out, not so much an effort "of physical endurance on Dunkirk lines but one of the mind and imagination, to accept new and different ways of doing things". And we need this not only to fulfil the short-term needs of our situation but even more to fulfil the imperative, the over-riding, long-term need to attract the foreign capital investor.

The successful conduct of any business enterprise requires creative imagination and a high degree of will power on the part of all ranks in the hierarchy of production. British industry to-day is terribly handicapped by the planning mentality, with its silly jargon about targets and quotas. That the quota is never implemented and the target never reached is quite a minor point. What really matters is that the whole conception is cock-eyed. The business man is not engaged in filling up gaps. His task is to anticipate, not by months but by years, trends of taste and the world-wide incidence of demand; in so doing he reaches the point where, in fact, his industry shapes the taste and so attracts and increases the demand for a commodity or a service which he has created and which would never have been asked for in the precise form it has assumed but for his act of imagination when he saw the potentiality while it was still unverified.

To proceed along the reverse lines, to wait until we see unsatisfied demand, and then laboriously to assemble the materials and the labour to meet it, is suicidal. It is the man, the business, the country, which knows what the potential customer needs before he knows it himself which will get and keep the lion's share of the world's trade. But the creator of business possibilities must have behind him an army of enthusiasts, not seekers after more leisure earned with less effort, but men and women anxious to make experiments and willing to take risks in the hope of a far higher standard of life than they at present enjoy. Along with the planning mentality we have to get rid of the safety-first mentality. We have to aim much higher as far as our standard of living is concerned. This is at once the opportunity and the responsibility of the Trade Unions. When they begin to face it, yet another step forward will have been taken towards the consolidation of Anglo-American relations.

DOUGLAS JERROLD.

POLITICS IN THE U.S.

DEMOCRACY WITH A DIFFERENCE

By R. J. CRUIKSHANK

IT is, of course, a grievous error to think of American politics in British terms, but the truth is that when the language is so similar, and the pulses beat so sympathetically, it is very hard not to do so. How provoking of the Americans to install the Speaker in the Chair and then make a Party Leader of him! How disturbing a nightmare to discover Colonel Clifton Brown changing into Mr. Herbert Morrison under one's eyes! How bewildering to find that one thing a Cabinet Minister must *not* do is to sit in the House! Suppose one read in our newspapers—"Mr. Shinwell has applied for the Chiltern Hundreds consequent upon his appointment as Secretary for War. This popular ex-Chairman of the Appropriations Committee will be much missed. It is expected the House of Lords will confirm his appointment by a small majority." How odd it would be if, in order to assure Mr. Anthony Eden's future, his admirers had to work hard to get him elected as Lord Lieutenant, or, shall we say, Governor of Middlesex.

The key to the Podsnap-maddening mystery of the American political system may be looked for in the idea of Federalism. The United States is a fine descriptive name —it is good to remember occasionally that it means precisely what it says. It betokens a coming together of States, forty-eight of them, most of them highly individualized. They are to-day united, magnificently and indisputably united. But it was no easy task in the beginning to bring the original thirteen States into a harmony, despite their close ties of blood and their encircling common perils. There were several occasions when the strains on union became almost intolerable, and the bloodiest Civil War in history was fought to establish the principle of "Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable".

The problem of union has been the peculiar problem which Destiny has given the American people to solve. Their success in doing so is the great contribution which the political genius of America has made to the modern world. Is it unfair, indeed, to rank it with the British Commonwealth and Empire as a concept of human government deriving from the Anglo-Saxon political genius? Those who are now devoting themselves to "the grand design" of United Europe might study with profit the story of the United States from the debates of the Federalists down to the very latest Party conventions held this summer in Philadelphia. For one may draw from American experience a wealth of wisdom about that most difficult but most glorious of enterprises, the reconciling of unity with freedom, the welding into a common purpose and faith of many divergent communities spread over a vast territory.* We may learn a great deal from U.S. history of those particular arts of statesmanship that are demanded in a Federal relationship; of the necessity for compromise; of the peculiar position of minorities in such a relationship; and of the disruptiveness of fanatics and doctrinaires.

THE Union began as a contract between the States: it remains so to this day. I have sometimes heard rigid theorists—those who believe in mathematical democracy and in the strict accounting of noses, express themselves shocked at the electoral inequalities of the United States Senate. It appears intolerable to them that the mighty State of New York with its 14,000,000

*To Mr. Herbert Agar, the historian who has brilliantly expounded this theme of American Federalism, I, like many another, am indebted for the enlightening of my ignorance and for providing many clues to political behaviour mystifying even to a long-time resident of the United States.

population and the State of Nevada with its 110,000 population should be represented by two Senators apiece. Big States and tiny States, Pennsylvania and New Mexico, California and Rhode Island, they each get their two Senatorial voices and their two votes. This is part of the ancient compact of union. This is one of the guarantees, implicit through the whole American system, that minorities shall not be gobbled up by majorities. The composition of the Senate is a protection to the agricultural States against being overwhelmed by the industrial ones, it is an assurance to each State that its individuality is respected, that its equal contribution to the great partnership is recognized. We can perhaps more readily comprehend this political conception if we think of it in terms of the British Commonwealth rather than in terms of the British Constitution.

We are all familiar with that line of criticism which attacks the American system as an artful invention of the Circumlocution Office for not getting things done. Yet this same inflexible system of government has absorbed the shock of violent party struggles. It survived the terrible ordeal of the war between the States. Framed by eighteenth century aristocrats and philosophers, it proved adaptable to the Industrial Revolution, and to the transformation of the United States from a largely pastoral community into an Industrial Colossus. This antiquated Constitution, created in the days when Venice still held the gorgeous East in fee, successfully met the strains and tensions involved in the evolution from *laissez-faire* and individualism to the welfare State, to the collectivism of the New Deal. Even that part of the American system of government which usually puzzles the British visitor most of all, the Supreme Court, has, in the long run, shown itself to be a flexible instrument, sensitive to the changing directions of the national will. Mr. Dooley's quip about the Supreme Court following the election returns embodies a profound political observation. Above all things, no Briton who saw Washington in either of the two World Wars can have any doubt of the capacity of the U.S. system of government to act speedily and decisively in a great crisis. Despite the much-debated division of powers between the Executive and the Legislation, there was no fumbling, no delay, at the time of Pearl Harbour.

READING American history and knowing the character of the American people, can one conceive of any other machinery of government that would have worked so well—or, maybe, have worked at all?

As Mr. Herbert Agar has pointed out, the Founding Fathers made one important miscalculation. They did not foresee, indeed, they sought to prevent the party system. They conceived a Republic in which the best citizens would be conscripted by their neighbours into the service of the State. They even devised a method of Presidential election intended to lift the choice of the First Citizen out of the reach of the mob. That was a chimera of noble minds. An aristocratic or oligarchic government in Washington could not have survived the first touch of the new forces of nineteenth century democracy. The two parties came into existence by virtue of historical necessity. Without them—to quote Mr. Agar again—the Constitution could not have worked. It is these two Parties that have been the great shock absorbers of the Constitution. It is through their agency that the system of checks and balances has been able to adapt itself to revolutionary changes in social and industrial conditions.

IT is fashionable, particularly in some British Left-Wing circles, to say that there is no difference between the Republicans and Democrats. They are mere factions struggling for jobs and patronage. They have no philosophy to inspire them, no passions to sustain them, no principles to separate them. Such political anachronisms cannot possibly survive in an industrial democracy. Before very long, so runs the glib argument, the Republicans and Democrats must be replaced by Parties "based on modern realities"—I think that is how the phrase usually goes. There will be, at last, the "realistic politics" of economic interests,

technology and the class struggle in the United States. There will be a Party of the Left of "workers by hand and brain", looking very like the British Labour Party, and sustained by two pillars—the Trade Unions and the Socialist intellectuals. There will be a Party of the Right formed from an alliance of Big Business, of "monopoly capitalism", and the white ascendancy party in the Southern States. That is a highly logical theory. The only thing conceivably wrong with it is that it leaves out of account the physical nature of America, the temperament of the American people and the patterns of American social and political history.

The two major American Parties cannot be compared with our own Conservatives, Liberals and Socialists. *They are in themselves functions of American Federalism.* They have that peculiar strength which in the United States pertains to every force and institution which serves to unite this vast country, for never let it be forgotten that the deepest instinct of the American people is their attachment to their own Federal union. Any attempt to build up a national party on a narrow economic or regional basis is likely to be resisted, so to speak, by sub-conscious Americanism. That is why Third Parties, based either on the agarian discontents of the West, or on the grievances of the workers in the big cities have so far always done poorly, and that is why Mr. Henry Wallace is not expected to do better this November than the last famous leader of revolt, Senator La Follette in 1924. An effort to remould the party system on the lines of the struggle between classes would not only be repugnant to the genuine social egalitarianism of the Americans but would imply a threat to the sacred union itself. But is there not something novel in the challenge of Mr. Wallace? On this side of the Atlantic, it is often asked if the bi-partisan foreign policy may not itself ultimately create a new party to oppose it. Mr. Wallace, it is true, is endeavouring to rally every element hostile to the Truman-Dewey, Marshall-Vandenberg policy. Those efforts may swell his vote, but they are hardly likely to provide the basis for a coherent Opposition. For these elements are too antipathetic to one another. The medley of Communists and fellow travellers, of extreme Isolationists and pure pacifists may join in a protest vote, but they have no other common interests on which any enduring partnership could be founded; no traditions, no regional loyalties, no historic associations, no economic principles. There is every evidence, too, that the bi-partisan policy commands overwhelming popular support. Mr. Wallace is likely to profit more from his domestic Radicalism and from his sedulous cultivation of the Negro vote than from his pro-Russian line, but the net result of his intervention can only be to consolidate Republican victory in a number of doubtful States.

THERE have been times in history when the Republicans have been the progressive party and the Democrats the reactionary party; there have been other times when the Democrats have been the Liberal Party and the Republicans the Conservative. But there has never been a time when either party has been all of the same colour.

Because the Republicans and Democrats are composed of so many diverse groups the battle of political ideas is frequently fought out *inside* the Parties. The primary system by which the enrolled voters in each Party elect their candidates has not achieved all that was hoped of it, but it does provide a machinery for determining the strength of Left, Right and Centre forces within the Party. The Americans are conscious of a rhythm in their political life by which the two Parties alternate as the vehicles of the nation's deeper purposes. In his first inaugural address Woodrow Wilson, for example, said: "No one can mistake the purpose for which the nation now seeks to use the Democratic Party. It seeks to use it to interpret a change in its own plans and point of view." This conception of the rôle of the major parties as interpreters of the national moods helps us to understand why the Democrats and Republicans constantly renew themselves like the phoenix and why Third Parties make so slight an appeal to the public. These Third Parties, though,

have traditionally played an important part in U.S. political life by agitating new ideas, by expressing grievances, by signalling warnings to the complacent. Over and over again in American history one of the Major Parties has ultimately adopted or adapted the programme of a Third Party, and with it has absorbed part of the dynamic of that movement.

THE attempts of many generations to bridge regional differences and economic conflicts, to reconcile old traditions, historical loyalties, old memories and hard-dying prejudices—all these have shaped the Democratic and Republican Parties. They are expressions of the comprehensiveness of the forty-eight States, and of the immense diversity of a country whose land mass is larger than Europe. But because they are coalitions of interests and alliances of contradictory elements, it would be a mistake to think of them as amorphous bodies, engaged eternally in the game of Ins and Outs, struggling for the possession of the "pork barrel" of patronage and the "pie counter" of jobbery. If you were to spend a little time in a township in Alabama, or in a little village in Vermont, you would never dare ask the question—"What is the difference between a Republican and Democrat?" In the Alabama township you would probably find it very hard to discover any man prepared to avow himself a Republican; in the Vermont village you might find it equally difficult to discover a Democrat. In such a contrast you would be presented with the traditional and regional loyalties in their most extreme form.

Apart from these differences of historical background, what broad generalizations can one safely make about Democrats and Republicans? It used to be said that the first was the low-tariff Party and the second the high-tariff Party, that the Republicans were the Party of the rich and the Democrats of the poor. These are half-truths, though in this election year the unfortunate Democrats, rent by schism and accorded by the political pundits no chance to win, are sorely short of funds while the Republicans are exceedingly prosperous. There is one general proposition about the Parties, however, that is worth considering, at least as a basis for discussion. It seems fairly true to say that the bulk of the Democrats still remember that their prophet, philosopher and founder was Thomas Jefferson. And it seems also fairly true to say that the bulk of the Republicans still preserve the inspiration of Alexander Hamilton. The Democrats are a strange amalgam of Southern Conservatives,* "poor-Whites," Eastern Labour groups, city bosses, New Deal intellectuals with whom Professor Laski must feel at home, old Wilsonians and modern planners. At one end of the country, the Democrats are "the best people" in the community, the paragons of respectability and culture; at the other end, they are the poor Irish families, Italian families, Polish and Czech families who live "on the other side of the railroad track". Every statement a foreigner makes about Republicans or Democrats should be hedged around with as many reservations as a description of the Chinese theatre, but in recent years most men or women of Liberal temperament have usually found themselves happier among the Democrats than the Republicans. Jefferson's dream of a pastoral community, marked by the classic Roman virtues, an egalitarian, high-minded and homespun society, eternally vigilant in the service of Liberty, and constantly jealous of the powers of government, may seem beautifully remote and irrelevant to the problems of modern industrial life. But the Jeffersonian faith in individual freedom, the suspicion of plutocrats as well as of aristocrats, and the Jeffersonian resentment against centralized authority, still mark the average Democrat, and in all that queer complex of economic interests and regional pre-occupations which I have touched upon, it sets him apart from the average Republican.

ON the other hand, the Republican is usually fortified by the strength of the reasoned philosophy of Conservatism which that man of dazzling genius Alexander

*It is sometimes forgotten that the Party includes Southern Liberals as well—and Southern demagogues of the Huey Long type.

Hamilton bequeathed him. To him, what are the first needs of human society? Order —good government, honest government— a prudent management of finances—a check upon the dark, irrational forces that make either for anarchy or tyranny—and, after that, the expansion of trade and industry, so that the common people may be well fed, clothed and housed. Now who can be best trusted to ensure the stability of society and provide good government but those who have the greatest stake in the country? Who are more likely to bring prosperity to the whole community than the men of unusual enterprise, energy, daring and resource who have brought prosperity to themselves?

When Mr. Roosevelt was declaiming against the Bourbons of wealth and the industrial Tories he must have stirred the shade of Jefferson beyond the waves of Lethe. But here again one has to qualify. As one moves West the spirit of Republicanism changes. There are many men and women in the Middle and Far Western States who for traditional reasons could never be other than Republican, but are proud of being progressives. They hate Wall Street, they were nurtured on the farmer's traditional dislike of bankers, they supported most of the New Deal and they favour such projects as the public ownership of electric power. The last time a Republican President was in the White House the breach between Eastern and Western Republicans in Congress was often acute.

THE weakness of the American Party system is a weakness inherent in all free Federal groupings. Because the Democrats and Republicans are each coalitions held together by a process of continuous compromise they are seen at their unhappiest when confronted with some issue of principle on which men are deeply divided. Meaningless formulas are often drawn up to paper over irreconcilable differences; men are urged to stifle their consciences for the sake of party unity. The peculiar strain to which a Federal Party is liable is illustrated by the current revolt of the Southern States against Mr. Truman. Under pressure from the East, and particularly from the party chiefs in the big industrial centres where there is a large Negro vote, the Democratic Convention accepted a Civil Rights plank in the platform that shocked and infuriated the Southerners. The South has always been the leading champion of States Rights, insisting that it is a gross usurpation of power and a breach of the ancient compact for the Federal authority to attempt to deal with the most difficult and delicate of all the South's domestic problems—the status of the Negro. That their own historic Party should propose enforcement from Washington of legal and economic rights for the Negro below the Mason-Dixon line has brought an open secession from Mr. Truman. A hurriedly summoned convention of these seceders at Birmingham, Alabama, nominated Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates to oppose Mr. Truman and Senator Barkley. While they have no hope of winning the election, the dissidents are certain to do Mr. Truman great damage in that very part of the country which is the traditional stronghold of the Democrats.

To the student of the American political system the 1948 election should prove fascinating. The Democrats, after sixteen years in office, appear certain of defeat. While the Southern revolt will deprive Mr. Truman of support from the Party's Conservative wing, Mr. Henry Wallace is likely to draw away from him a good many Left-Wing votes. Is the famous coalition breaking irreparably in pieces? Mr. Roosevelt strove hard to emphasize the Liberal and Radical elements in the Party, but his magical authority, his skill and, at times, his political guile, avoided a rupture with the Conservative South. There is bound to be renewed speculation about the Democratic Party's chances of survival, renewed forecasts of a new alignment on the lines of all the Conservatives under one umbrella and all the Liberals under another. But, as I have suggested, the problems of the American Party system cannot be resolved so easily as this. It should be noted that the Southerners condemned Mr. Dewey and the Republicans in terms at least as strong as those which they used in disavowing Mr. Truman.

AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

By MALCOLM MUGGERIDGE

IT is sometimes suggested, and even believed, that the United States, unlike other nations, has so far escaped any expansionist tendency in the course of its development. This, in fact, is as untrue as the corresponding myth on this side of the Atlantic, that the nineteenth century was a period of peace and stability. The years between the Battle of Waterloo and the Boer War seem peaceful because the numerous wars fought then were against opponents of greatly inferior military strength and therefore easily defeated, as, for instance, the Tibetans and the Zulus. Similarly, American expansionism was, in its first manifestations, confined to the American Continent, and therefore, in the eyes of Americans, scarcely counted.

The phrase which covered this domestic or internal expansion, including such manifestations of it as the incorporation of huge territories like Texas, was a highly significant one, which has been used again and again in the last century of American history, and is being used still to-day. The phrase is *Manifest Destiny*. By Manifest Destiny Americans meant their right and their duty to populate the North American Continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from parched New Mexico to frozen Alaska, and, through the operation of the Munroe Doctrine, to dominate the whole Western Hemisphere. It is an American version of the same mystique which Kipling and Rhodes provided, in their different idiom, for the growth of the British Empire.

Seward, Lincoln's Secretary of State, envisaged Manifest Destiny setting its bounds wider still and wider. In the course of Lincoln's first election campaign, on the eve of the Civil War, he proclaimed to enthusiastic audiences an American Empire which would extend to the Arctic Ocean, include Canada and the Latin American Republics, and have its capital in the ancient Aztec capital of Mexico City. This empire, he said, with remarkable prescience, would inevitably come to grips with Russia, and the location of the conflict would be the Far East, "in regions where civilization first began." Such apocalyptic visions were able to flourish, along with more everyday concepts like the Monroe Doctrine.

THIS phase of American expansion within the Western Hemisphere took place in the comfortable shelter of the Pax Britannica. Though the American Colonies had broken away from the British Empire, they virtually enjoyed all the advantages of continuing to belong to it. They were honorary members of a rich and powerful association, which they could freely abuse without thereby forfeiting the benefits of membership. The Monroe Doctrine might be enunciated in Washington, but it was effective because, to all intents and purposes, it was under-written by British sea power. During the period of American expansion there was, in fact, no serious security problem. The United States became a world power without ever having to squander blood and treasure in the process. It was a painless and inexpensive process—world power without tears. The double pleasure could be enjoyed of, on the one hand, denouncing British imperialism, and, on the other, participating free of charge in its defensive system. It is, incidentally, because of this, that Americans to-day find the responsibilities of being a Great Power at once so novel and so uncomfortable. They became a Great Power without being aware of what was happening, and find themselves a decisive factor in the world's power equilibrium without having had any previous experience of exercising this function. To use one of their own favourite expressions, they did not become a world Power "the hard way".

Actually, at the turn of the century there were not lacking individual Americans who saw that the halcyon days of largely effortless expansion were drawing to a close. That remarkable, if somewhat erratic, statesman, Theodore Roosevelt, pointed out as

long ago as 1911 that "the United States would be obliged to step in, at least temporarily, in order to re-establish the balance of power in Europe, never mind against which country, or group of countries their efforts might have to be directed". "In fact, he said, "we ourselves are becoming, owing to our strength and geographical situation, more and more the balance of power of the whole globe."

His words indicated an awareness of what was happening in the world. The period of British supremacy, based on sea power, was coming to an end, and in the inevitable struggle for dominance which would result therefrom, the United States would not be able, in any circumstances, to hold aloof. If, however, Theodore Roosevelt saw clearly what was happening, the great majority of his fellow-countrymen lived on in their isolationist dream. The balance of power in Europe seemed to them a far away and irrelevant consideration. With a sense of superior moral rectitude, they looked across the Atlantic at quaint and absurd institutions like monarchies, at soldiers in red coats, theatrical exercises in diplomacy, and holinesses and highnesses and other exalted persons coming and going, without realizing that they were as deeply involved as anyone else in the new conflicts which were so obviously arising.

AMERICAN intervention in the 1914-1918 war was belated, but still decisive. In his 1916 presidential campaign Woodrow Wilson's followers used the slogan: "He kept us out of the war," but in April of the following year, Wilson called a special Congress Session at which he asked for a war resolution. The war was being fought, Wilson said, for "the ultimate peace of the world and for the liberation of its peoples, the German people included; for the right of nations great and small and the privilege of men everywhere to choose their way of life and of obedience. The world must be made safe for Democracy".

Though, after the war was over, the Senate repudiated Wilson's participation in the Versailles Settlement and in the newly established League of Nations, and the world was not made safe for democracy, or, indeed, for anything else, the fact that, for the first time, the United States had become a creditor nation was bound drastically to affect American foreign policy. Wilson went down, paralysed and embittered, but his phrases—those phrases so characteristic of the American academic scene to which he belonged—continued to echo, with increasing emptyness, round the world. The launching of phrases can be more deadly in its consequences than the despatch of armies and of fleets. If there is one thing this generation should have learnt, it is that words unrelated to the realities of human conduct are liable to have fearful consequences.

SUPERFICIALLY it looked, in the golden 'twenties, as though American participation in the 1914-18 war had been an interlude, and the body of William Jennings Bryan, like John Brown's, was going marching on. This comfortable illusion was shattered, first by an economic collapse in Europe, and then by a depression of unparalleled severity in the United States. As it happened, it was not William Jennings Bryan, but Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who went marching on. If Roosevelt was, in a sense, Wilson's heir and successor, he was vastly more astute, tougher, a politician of consummate ability and agility. With Roosevelt at the helm, the United States sailed with the wind truly, but took a course which was at once dashing and skilful, if sometimes disconcertingly incalculable.

Roosevelt, like Wilson in 1917, fought the election campaign of 1940 on a pledge to keep America out of the war, and then, with the help of the Japanese, took her in fine style into it. Under Roosevelt's leadership, the American war effort, both in production and in men, achieved stupendous proportions. It was not a matter of the United States coming in to deal the last decisive blow, as in the 1914-18 war, but of leading the battle, alike in Europe and in Asia.

This time the war ended with America incomparably the most powerful and richest nation in the world. There was no possibility now of evading responsibilities and repu-

diating involvement in world affairs. The responsibilities had already been undertaken before the war ended; involvement was an accomplished fact which Congress could not undo. The American people found themselves in possession of an overwhelmingly superior weapon, the atomic bomb, and of an industrial and agricultural production so greatly increased that its surplus would serve to provide the requirements of large areas of the rest of the world. In a desert of rubble and confusion and despair, the American economy still worked, the American administration still functioned.

IN this situation what policy was the United States to pursue? That was the question of questions, both as far as the American people and the rest of the world were concerned. What was to be done with this vast apparatus of wealth and power, when the British Empire was visibly decomposing, when France, from being a Great Power, had come in a few short years to exist only precariously, when Germany was a desert, and in the Middle and Far East dangerous power vacuums were in process of being created?

Faced with this situation, the American people had, and, to a certain extent still have, no clear idea what to do about it. Their power and wealth came to pass too suddenly and effortlessly for them to have acquired the requisite experience in its exercise. Roosevelt's ideas, as they found expression in instruments like the Atlantic Charter, and in the disastrous agreements, for which he was largely responsible, at Yalta and Potsdam, ran in nineteenth century channels. He firmly believed—and everything that has been published since his death confirms this—that Russia would be prepared to participate in a "Democratic" post-war settlement. Even after his death the momentum of his leadership continued the same attitude of mind. In the face of the immense amount of evidence to the contrary, the United States Government went on acting on the assumption that agreements entered into with Russia would be observed, and that a regime which had run for a quarter of a century on the basis of terror and forced labour, would participate sincerely and eagerly in promoting the growth and spread of representative institutions and free economies throughout Eastern and Central Europe.

How a person of Roosevelt's proved astuteness could have come to believe so lunatic a proposition is one of the mysteries of the age. It is one of those strange aberrations which will puzzle future historians. Roosevelt, quicker than perhaps any American who ever lived at estimating a political situation, whose political practices, as his former campaign manager Jum Farley has pointed out, certainly did not err on the side of squeamishness, who managed for fourteen years to drive in double harness those two horses, furiously galloping in opposite directions, the Southern Democrats and the Left Wing Trade Unionists and intellectuals —this man, in assessing the Russians, made mistakes which would have got a humble news agency reporter the sack, and perhaps even an official of the British Foreign Office a reprimand.

ROOSEVELT appears to have believed that he could charm Stalin in much the same way that he could charm Southern senators into supporting policies which were inherently unsympathetic to them. It was the wrong approach. Stalin, whatever merits or demerits he may have as a successor to the Czars, is not easily charmed. As a Rotarian, he is scarcely promising material. Smiles, and the use of nicknames, leave him singularly unmoved. Miss Frances Perkins, in her naïve but informative study of Roosevelt, gives an indication of how this process of charming Stalin in Roosevelt's estimation was supposed to work.

"You know," the President told Miss Perkins on one occasion, speaking of the Teheran Conference, "the Russians are interesting people. For the first three days I made absolutely no progress. I couldn't get any personal connection with Stalin, although I had done everything he asked me to do. I had stayed at his Embassy, gone to his dinners, been introduced to his ministers and generals. He was correct, stiff, solemn,

not smiling, nothing human to get hold of. I felt pretty discouraged. If it was all going to be official paper work, there was no sense in my having made this long journey which the Russians had wanted. They couldn't come to America or any place in Europe for it. I had come there to accommodate Stalin. I felt pretty discouraged because I thought I was making no personal headway. What we were doing could have been done by the foreign ministers.

"I thought it over all night and made up my mind I had to do something desperate. I couldn't stay in Teheran forever. I had to cut through this icy surface so that later I could talk by telephone or letter in a personal way. I had scarcely seen Churchill alone during the conference. I had a feeling that the Russians did not feel right about seeing us conferring together in a language which we understood and they didn't.

"On my way to the conference room that morning we caught up with Winston and I had just a moment to say to him, 'Winston, I hope you won't be sore at me for what I am going to do.'

"Winston just shifted his cigar and grunted. I must say he behaved very decently afterwards.

"I began almost as soon as we got into the conference room. I talked privately with Stalin. I didn't say anything that I hadn't said before, but it appeared quite chummy and confidential, enough so that the other Russians joined us to listen. Still no smile.

"Then I said, lifting my hand up to cover a whisper (which, of course, had to be interpreted) 'Winston is cranky this morning, he got up on the wrong side of the bed.'

"A vague smile passed over Stalin's eyes, and I decided I was on the right track. As soon as I sat down at the conference table, I began to tease Churchill about his Britishness, about John Bull, about his cigars, about his habits. It began to register with Stalin. Winston got red and scowled, and the more he did so, the more Stalin smiled. Finally Stalin broke out into a deep, hearty guffaw, and for the first time in three days I saw light. I kept it up until Stalin was laughing with me, and it was then that I called him 'Uncle Joe.' He would have thought me fresh the day before, but that day he laughed and came over and shook my hand.

"From that time on our relations were personal, and Stalin himself indulged in an occasional witticism. The ice was broken and we talked like men and brothers."

Later, according to Miss Perkins, the President did come to have doubts about whether such an approach to Stalin was producing quite the results which he had hoped.

"I wish," he said to Miss Perkins, "someone would tell me about the Russians. I don't know a good Russian from a bad Russian. I can tell a good Frenchman from a bad Frenchman. I can tell a good Italian from a bad Italian. I know a good Greek when I see one. But I don't understand the Russians. I just don't know what makes them tick. I wish I could study them. Frances, see if you can find out what makes them tick."

The admirable Miss Perkins did her best to find out for the President what made the Russians tick, but, with the best will in the world, it may be doubted whether she was the right person to undertake this important assignment. In any case, she gives no indication that whatever researches she was able to undertake produced any useful result.

IT was not until Mr. Byrnes had been Secretary of State for well over a year, that the United States Government awoke to the fearful reality of the post-war situation. The process of its awakening is the story of recent American foreign policy. It began with Mr. Byrnes' broadcast to the effect that in dealing with the Russians patience and firmness were equally essential. The next step was his speech at Frankfort, in which he stated that the reconstruction of the German economy was essential, and that, by implication, the Morgenthau plan for de-industrializing Germany could only result in the destruction of Western Europe.

The replacement of Mr. Byrnes by Mr. Marshall was another step in the same process. Mr. Marshall returned from the Moscow meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers convinced that any further yield-

ing to Russia would be disastrous, and that the Russians had no present intention of participating in, or even negotiating, a peace settlement in regard to Germany and Austria. Their policy, as Mr. Marshall bluntly pointed out, was directed towards perpetuating a condition of economic despair and misery in order that they might be able, in the classic Bolshevik manner, to seize power and clamp on the apparatus of terror which they know so well how to manipulate. Out of this conviction came, first the acceptance of specific commitments in Greece and Italy, and then the Marshall Plan and the European Recovery Programme, which has now received the approval of Congress and is already in process of being put into effect.

Thus the United States Government has been induced by the logic of post-war events to embark on what amounts to peace-time lend-lease aimed at promoting the co-ordination and ultimate unification of the economies of the sixteen nations participating in the European Recovery Programme, as well as Western Germany. A predominantly Republican Congress with strong isolationist affiliations has sanctioned so expensive and risky a policy because it seems to represent the best, and probably the only, hope of creating in Western Europe an area of political and economic stability based on free institutions, which will hold back the monstrous spread of Slav imperialism masquerading as world revolution, and render ineffective the quisling fellow-travellers in this and other countries who affect still to regard such a prospect as promising human liberation and progress.

THE basis of this policy of "containment" has been well set out by Mr. George Kennan, head of the Planning Section of the State Department, in a now famous despatch, published anonymously in the American periodical *Foreign Affairs*. Mr. Kennan, who has himself served in the American Embassy in Moscow, begins with an acute analysis of the relation between the "ideology inherited by the present Soviet leaders from the movement in which they had their political origin, and the circumstances of the power which they now have exercised for nearly three decades in Russia". The maintenance of this pattern of Soviet power, "namely, the pursuit of unlimited authority domestically, accompanied by the cultivation of the semi-myth of implacable foreign hostility," Mr. Kennan considers, "has gone far to shape the actual machinery of Soviet power as we know it to-day". Therefore, it is idle to suppose that "the leaders of Russia would dream of voluntarily parting with the organs of suppression, by means of which they have maintained themselves in power".

"In these circumstances," Mr. Kennan states, "it is clear that the main element of any United States policy towards the Soviet Union must be that of a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies. . . . The Soviet pressure against the free institutions of the Western world is something that can be contained by the adroit and vigilant application of counterforce at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points, corresponding to the shifts and manœuvres of Soviet policy, but which cannot be charmed or talked out of existence."

"At the same time," he goes on, "the possibilities for American policy are by no means limited to holding the line and hoping for the best. It is entirely possible for the United States to influence by its actions the internal developments, both within Russia and throughout the international Communist movement, by which Russian policy is largely determined. . . ." The United States must "create among the peoples of the world generally the impression of a country which knows what it wants, which is coping successfully with the problems of its internal life and with the responsibilities of a World Power, and which has a spiritual vitality capable of holding its own among the major ideological currents of the time. To the extent that such an impression can be created and maintained, the aims of Russian Communism must appear sterile and quixotic, the hopes and enthusiasm of Moscow's supporters must wane, and added strain must be imposed on the Kremlin's foreign

policies. For the palsied decrepitude of the capitalist world is the keystone of Communist philosophy. Even the failure of the United States to experience the early economic depression which the ravens of the Red Square have been predicting with such complacent confidence since hostilities ceased would have deep and important repercussions throughout the Communist world."

"Thus," Mr. Kennan concludes—and his conclusion applies as forcibly to Western Europe as to the United States—"the issue of Soviet-American relations is in essence a test of the over-all worth of the United States as a nation among nations. To avoid destruction the United States need only measure up to its own best traditions and prove itself worthy of preservation as a great nation."

SINCE the Marshall Plan was first mooted by the Secretary of State in his famous Havard speech, events have moved with such rapidity that even the European Recovery Programme has become, to a certain extent, obsolete. It is coming to be realized in the United States that economic aid in itself will not suffice. To be effective it must be backed by military guarantees, and for these military guarantees to be effective, they in turn must be backed by armed might. President Truman recently felt bound to call a special Congress Session to inform it that compulsory military service and large additional expenditure on armaments were essential if the threat of Slav imperialism was to be resisted. He was listened to respectfully, and applauded with particular enthusiasm when he said that the United States should give "full support" to the five-nation Western European alliance for "defence against common aggression".

The brutal Communist coup in Czechoslovakia, followed by the pitiable suicide of Masaryk, and the deliberate Russian blockade of Berlin, have opened many eyes. General Wedemeyer, for instance, has publicly expressed the view that "there is no point in sending money abroad without military aid to protect it . . . we must think in terms of blood as well as treasure". As a result of Russian aggression, American policy has begun to think in terms of blood.

Testifying last January, before the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, Mr. Bernard Baruch said that the United States should guarantee a united Western Europe against aggression. It is a far cry from such statements to the Atlantic Charter to which, with unconscious irony, Stalin was invited to adhere. "After the final destruction of the Nazi tyranny," this pathetic document runs, "they (i.e., Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin) hope to see established a peace which will afford to all nations the means of dwelling in safety within their own boundaries, and which will afford assurances that all the men in all the lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want. . . ."

The Nazi tyranny has been destroyed, but fear and want daily increase their empire. There are no illusions now about how deeply, how crucially, the United States is involved in this tragic situation. Throughout the length and breadth of that country there is scarcely a voice raised now to suggest that it might be possible to hold aloof. Only the tragic - comic figure of Henry Wallace, manipulated by Communists and fellow-travellers, suggests—but heaven knows what he does suggest. It is difficult to discover.

Virtual unanimity on foreign policy has been achieved. With the one lamentable exception of Palestine, this has resulted in the United States Government being able for the first time to speak for a united nation where foreign affairs are concerned. The American people might conceivably fail in the supreme test now to be made of the strength and purpose of the national will as expressed through national institutions. If they should, then inevitably Western Europe would be submerged by a Slav avalanche, and two thousand years of Christian civilization would peter out to the accompaniment of an obsequious whimper of satisfaction from the London School of Economics. Present indications are, however, that they will not fail; that this remarkable people, which is composed of all peoples, will effectively nourish and defend the civilization whence they are derived.

RICHARD JEFFERIES

By C. HENRY WARREN

RICHARD JEFFERIES

"O THE flummery of a birth place!" wrote Keats to his friend Reynolds, after a visit to Burns' cottage at Ayr. "Cant! Cant! Cant! It is enough to give a spirit the guts-ache." One is sometimes tempted to say as much of centenaries; and no doubt Richard Jefferies, who was born a hundred years ago, will this year be made the occasion for plenty of flummery. A Wiltshire farmer's son, he wrote of the (southern) English countryside as it were from the inside; and his descriptions, in a score or more of books, are as remarkable for their unflinching realism as for their delicacy of perception and expression.

Illustrated with drawings from THE GAMEKEEPER AT HOME, *by Charles Whymper*

Nevertheless, it has been his misfortune to attract the uncritical admiration of a considerable body of what one may call the wind-on-the-heath brethren. For this, of course, his *The Story of my Heart* is largely to blame. Indeed, it is this book (along with Edward Carpenter's *Towards Democracy*) which these admirers tuck into their rucksacks when, in shorts and sandals, they sally forth over the hills and far away. Happily, however, *The Story*, with its vague, pagan mysticism and its impassioned call for a nobler breed of men and women, is only one of Jefferies' books; and nobody, reading it for the first time and unaware of

his nature essays and descriptions of rural life in general, would ever suppose that its author was our finest delineator of the English agricultural scene of the '70's and '80's or that he excelled over all other country writers for the sensitiveness and beauty of his informed pictures from nature.

All the same, perhaps I should make it clear at once that I do not subscribe to the view that it would have been better if *The Story* had never been published. I blame the readers rather than the book. "Jefferies does not . . . pretend to draw up a syllabus for disciples," wrote Edward Thomas; "and it is true of him, as of the greatest teachers, that his best lovers never become his disciples, since his work is to inspire, and, like wine, the ways of his inspiration are many." Yet it is salutary to remember that even W. H. Hudson, for all his appreciation of Jefferies, could not approve of this breathless "Autobiography of a Soul", whilst D. H. Lawrence, whom one might surely have expected to be attracted by it, wondered whether in time its author had not "winced away" from it. Personally, I think Sir William Beach Thomas, sane and far-seeing countryman that he is, gave us the best assessment of it when he described it as "that marvellous essay in mysticism, which never quite found the expressiveness it sought".

Therefore I would say of *The Story* that it is a necessary book—necessary, that is, to its author, who tells us that he meditated upon it for seventeen years, and also to his reader, since it is the expression, however inadequate, of a vital aspect of his character. The faith that bursts like a naked glare from its pages is the same faith that illuminates the rest of Jefferies' work; and the part cannot rightly be isolated from the whole. For all that, *The Story* is a dangerous book and not at all the most suitable one whereby to make its author's acquaintance—as it so frequently is. Rather I would suggest his descriptive essays—such as the two collections called *The Open Air* and *The Life of the Fields*—or those two early, complimentary books, *The Gamekeeper at Home* and *The Amateur Poacher*. In the essays, it is true, the mystic is not absent, but at least he is not so obtrusively present as to get in the way of the reader whose inclination is more towards objective appearances. Moreover, since all these books were originally intended for publication in magazines and papers, their matter is simple and their manner easy. Objective appearances are here Jefferies' main concern; and when he is describing, nobody can better him for mirror-like lucidity. In his pages the southern English countryside really is recreated, because, for the first time, it is being described by the participant, the genuine countryman, the farmer's son.

SOMETHING further should be said about Jefferies' easy manner and simple matter. It is a charge sometimes levelled against him that his simplicity can be merely pedestrian, ordinary. "There is a wry-neck in the orchard beside the Red Lion Inn; another frequents the hedges and trees behind St. Matthew's Church; up Claygate Lane there is another—the third or fourth gateway on the left side is the place to listen." Such a passage (and it would not be difficult to find others) would seem to justify this criticism. It is as if Jefferies were copying straight out of his note-books into his essays—and no doubt at times he did so. In explanation of this, though not necessarily in extenuation, it should be remembered that for the greater part of his short working life, i.e., after he had discovered where his true bent lay, he was tormented by sickness and poverty: he had to write unceasingly, even when he could not hold a pen and must dictate every word, in order to keep himself and family alive. He died at the age of thirty-nine, and in the last eight years he wrote sixteen books, not to mention uncollected essays and articles. It would be surprising indeed if he did not sometimes lapse into the ordinary, the commonplace.

His critics are not always aiming their shafts at such easy targets as the wry-neck I have just quoted. Their complaint is that the general level of Jefferies' observations is too low and that in recording them a flat style predominates. Mr. Geoffrey Grigson,

I see, in a recent note on Jefferies, makes what is tantamount to such a complaint. He does not like Jefferies. He finds the scene in his books *transferred* rather than *interpreted*. He then goes on to say that "the call of Jefferies is to children, innocently, and to the immature, to the everlasting looking-glass gazers . . . Jefferies has always captured the second-rate". Unfortunately for Mr. Grigson, his impression occurs (in *Countrygoer*) along with the impressions of several other writers of to-day; and so, using his criterion, we must conclude that Desmond MacCarthy, Charles Morgan, John Betjeman, R. M. Lockley and Brian Vesey-Fitzgerald are all "second-rate", since they admire Jefferies. Indeed, Mr. Grigson's fondness for the easy game of debunking (did he not a little while ago announce to the world over the radio that Constable was no great shakes as a painter?) is such that it would be a waste of time to refute him if there were not always a public willing to tag on behind the newest fashion-monger.

Mr. Grigson speaks as a townsman—or should I, using his own methods, say a townee? "Give me always the same plain road," said Jefferies, knowing, like the great countryman he was, that all a lifetime would not be long enough to exhaust the pleasure it could yield, as season rolled round to season, to the seeing eye and the quiet mind. How should such as Mr. Grigson understand this? The art of getting it down on paper, in all its detail, exact, sensuous, full of the whiff of life, is to him merely "transference". Jefferies (like Van Gogh) could take a square yard of the meadowland grasses at his feet and so describe it, in its teeming life, that the agriculturalist must appreciate it for its verisimilitude as the layman for its livingness—as if he had only to put down his hand to feel the sun on the sappy blades. How, I wonder, would "interpretation" improve on this?

NOBODY can take us out into the country as easily, as completely, as Jefferies can do; and his method, more often than not, is to build up the scene detail by detail, letting one thing lead to another, as it does in life; for, as he knows, in the country all things dovetail together and all things are organically related. Not his the purple patch (for all that he is often referred to as a prose-poet of nature) but the senstively and delicately recorded fact; and if this is sometimes seemingly dull and ordinary, why, so it is in life, and the more thereby are we prepared for the quiet light that will presently shine from his words illuminating all that has gone before. "In the furrows is a little ice—white because the water has shrunk from beneath it, leaving it hollow—and on the stile is a crust of rime, cold to the touch, which he brushes off in getting over. . . ." Here is an authenticity which, however it may be with Mr. Grigson, the countryman will immediately recognize: it is the poet's eye at work.

To compare Jefferies, unfavourably, with Gilbert White, as others do, is similarly unjust and shows a failure to recognize his true quality. Whatever his many other merits, White was first and foremost a naturalist—a collator of the known facts of natural history and a discoverer of new—an observer of nature who, by patient addition to extant knowledge, ever helped to push back the barriers of ignorance. Jefferies was hardly this at all. Edward Thomas, his best biographer and most kin of appreciators, called him an "amateur naturalist"; but even this fails to state the case. A little while before his death Jefferies wrote an introduction to a popular edition of Gilbert White. In this he said: "If the great observer had put down what he saw of the people of his day just as he has put down his notes of animals and birds, there would have been a book composed of extraordinary interest. . . . He knew the farmer and the squire; he had access everywhere; and he had the quickest of eyes. It must ever be regretted that he did not leave a natural history of the people of his day. We should then have had a picture of England just before the beginning of our present era, and a wonderful difference it would have shown." And this, though he does not seem to have guessed as much, was exactly what Jefferies himself had been doing. He left us a picture of the rural (southern) England of his time which, for

The Keeper's Cottage

The Gentleman in Velveteen

accuracy and completeness, must ever be as valuable to the student as, for delicacy and sensitiveness of perception, it is pleasurable to the general reader. Crop and stock, as well as woodland and meadow, farmer and fogger, as well as bird, beast and flower—all are in Jefferies' pages: in fact, as one reads him, one finds that sooner or later everything that comes within the countryman's experience is noted. Had he been a naturalist, as White was, or even an amateur naturalist, as Thomas said he was, his country pictures would never have achieved this kind of totality. After all, did he not say of himself that he was "a student of nature and human life?"

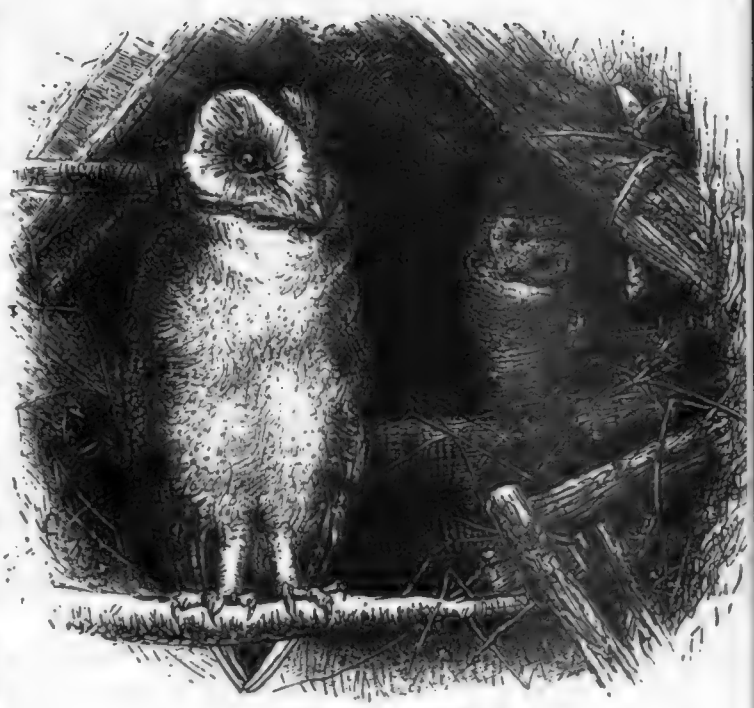
And so I come to an aspect of Jefferies' work which, because it has hitherto been strangely neglected and because it is essential to our appraisal of his worth and applicability to-day, I would especially draw attention. If excuse were necessary for the celebration of this particular centenary, here is one.

"A student of nature and human life"—and yet, to read most of what has been written about him and to listen to most of what is said, one would never suppose that Jefferies had any living interest in people at all. Whole anthologies of his writings appear from time to time in which there is scarcely an extract to remind us that Jefferies was more than a delineator of the English rural scene with its human inhabitants all left out. The nature essays, *The Gamekeeper at Home*, *The Amateur Poacher* and *The Story of my Heart*—it is by these that Jefferies is known to the general reader, though they represent only a part of his work and perhaps not the best part.

IT is usual to speak of Jefferies in his earlier years as an idler, unsociable, more at home on the open downs than on his father's Wiltshire farm. If he was an idler it was only in the sense that Keats had in mind when he advocated the practice of a *diligent indolence*. "Let us not therefore go hurrying about and collecting honey, bee-like, buzzing here and there impatiently from a knowledge of what is to be aimed at, but let us open our leaves like a flower to

be passive and receptive. . . ." Lounging against a favourite oak, or lying stretched in the sun on a thymy barrow, Jefferies was practising that passivity and receptivity from which, later, were to come both the mysticism of *The Story* and the clear, objective descriptions of the nature essays. If he was unsociable, it was because country life was no doubt even more inimical then than it is now to any kind of life above the comfortable norm. P. Anderson Graham wrote of him, in 1901, that "one of the surviving friends of his boyhood tells me that he never cared for companions even in those early days, was not addicted to any of the ordinary games or pastimes, and would pass even his closest acquaintance without speaking". For this last, his short-sightedness may have been in part accountable for his preoccupation of mind: in either case his bucolic neighbours would greedily have seized upon it as a proper occasion for censure. When, towards the end of his life, he composed an essay on the village where he had lived as a boy and young man, "Were the people all so beneficent and kindly," he asked, "that I must needs look back; all welcoming with open hand and open door? No, the reverse; there was not a single one friendly to me." As for his aversion to "the ordinary games and pastimes", should we otherwise have had that shelf-ful of inimitable books not one of which we would willingly spare?

THIS usual conception of Jefferies does not embrace the whole man. His books testify to this time and time again. He may not, in those early years, have been a good mixer with his fellows but he was certainly a good observer of them. Probably his idleness was exaggerated in the local mind because he was a farmer's son; and the only place for a farmer's son, of course, is in his father's fields—not loafing on the hills. Bound in their own lifelong allegiance to the land the villagers would have scant tolerance for anything so materially unprofitable as "diligent indolence". In any case, such remoteness from the humdrum of human contact as he may have shown in early years could scarcely have survived the experience



Owls in every Barn

The Keeper's Kitchen

of his first salaried job on the staff of a Swindon newspaper. He earned his fellow-workers' good-will (except for his hand-writing) and applied his quick ear to police court proceedings as profitably as he had hitherto applied it to the sounds of nature.

There is even more conclusive proof, however, that his description of himself as a student of human life was justified. It was by means of a couple of letters to *The Times* (they were really articles) on the life and conditions of the Wiltshire labourer that he first gained a hearing as a writer. The astute observation exhibited in these letters was such that editors and publishers, on the look-out for writers with something to say and an individual way of saying it, were quick to approach him for further articles and studies in the same vein.

WHAT was it that deflected Jefferies from this promising course? How did it happen that he turned aside and began to write those nature essays which are now fastened on to him as if they were his only ware? Conjecture is our only answer. All we know for certain is that in 1876 he wrote to the editor of the *New Quarterly* telling him that he was planning a book to be based on his own observations and experiences as a countryman and that he "would endeavour to bring in some of the glamour —the magic of sunshine, and green things, and calm waters—if I could". The result was *The Gamekeeper at Home*; and from then onwards, through *Wild Life in a Southern County* and *Round about a Great Estate* to *The Dewy Morn* and *Amaryllis at the Fair*, the best and most of his work was concerned with the depiction of the natural scene with only occasional glimpses of rustic procedure and rural character.

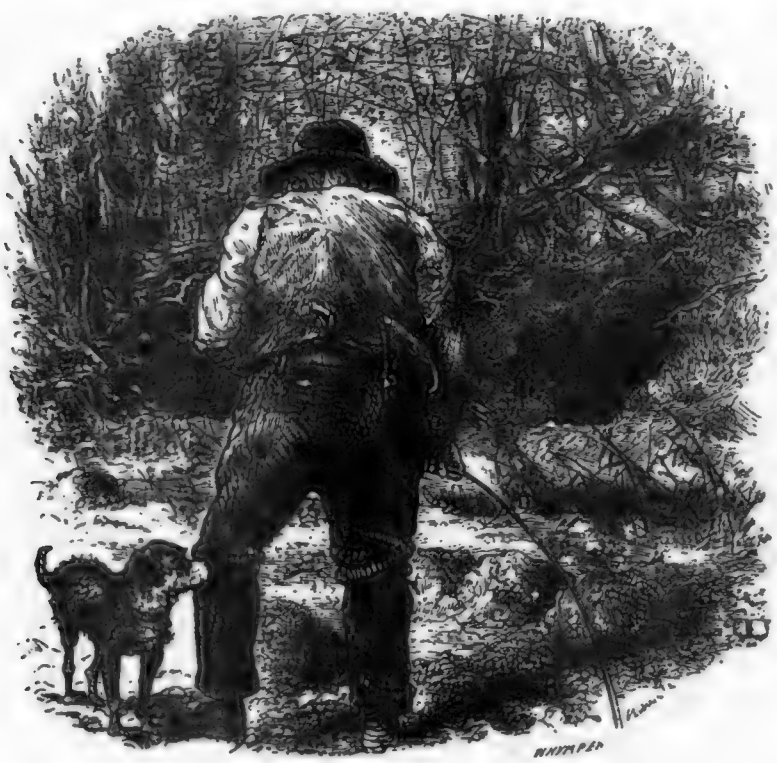
Perhaps poverty had something to do with this deflection of course? He was a journalist to this extent at least that, novels apart, most of his work was originally intended to appear in magazines or papers; and editors must be pandered to. The attitude of the general reading public towards nature had hitherto been aesthetic and moral. "The study of the simplest vegetable organizations," wrote the editor of a history of British lichens, which appeared when Jefferies was a boy, "could scarcely fail to create or intensify a love of the beautiful in Nature . . . and thereby to lead the mind of the observer by imperceptible gradations to 'look from Nature up to Nature's God' ". But the public mood was changing and no doubt editors were glad to find in Jefferies one who, in so sensitive a manner, could describe the objective appearances of the natural world about him.

HAPPILY, he had already compiled more than an outline for that "natural history of the people". And where is it to be found? First of all, in *Hodge and his Masters*, a comprehensive study of the countryman of his day that has no equal for first-hand observation of the farmer (old style or progressive, small or big), the farm-hand, the parson, the squire, the country solicitor and the country editor, all, in fact, who either directly or indirectly live on and by the land. The period dealt with was as transitional as our own, if we substitute steam-plough for tractor; and, although Jefferies nicely holds the balance, it is obvious where his sympathy lies. The agricultural innovations of his day—the reaping-machine and the elevator, the silo and the steam-plough—all win his approval: "my sympathies and hopes," he said elsewhere, "are with the light of the future". Then there is the posthumous collection of essays and studies called *The Toilers of the Field* which includes "John Smith's Shanty", a story of such insight into the life of the country labourer of the '70's (Crabbe could not have bettered it) that I am always amazed it is so little known. Farmer Iden in *Amaryllis*, the miller and the steward in *The Dewy Morn*, and old Hilary in *Round About a Great Estate* are other fine examples of Jefferies' mastery in the portrayal of country people, whilst even the collections of mainly nature essays are not without their reminders of how certainly Jefferies was aware that the proper study of mankind is man—"One of the New Voters" in *The Open Air*, for instance, "Rural Dynamite"

in *The Life of the Fields*, and the ruthless studies of cottagers' habits and character in *Field and Hedgerow*.

Here is a Jefferies all too little known and yet every bit as worthy of our attention and evocative of our enjoyment as the author of *The Pageant of Summer* or *The July Grass*. I suggest that the next anthologist should concentrate on this aspect of his writings and that his admirers should forget for awhile *The Story of my Heart*. The general reader of to-day has developed a considerable interest in the life and work of the countryman: he wants to know what is going on the other side of the hedges. Like the miner, the agricultural worker is in the news. Immediate needs apart, this is all one with the awakening realization that a nation sacrifices its best interests when it neglects its agriculture and the welfare of those dependent upon it. But there can be no healthy appreciation of the life and work of the rural labourer to-day unless it takes into account the conditions he endured hitherto and the slow revolution which these conditions helped to bring about. There could scarcely be a better aid to this understanding than Jefferies has provided in his portraits of and observations on the agricultural community of his day. They are first-hand and realistic: well he knew that "curious mixture of the grotesque, the ignorance, and yet cleanness, that go to make up hamlet life". He extolled, none more, the good qualities of the labourer and fearlessly exposed his weaknesses. He saw the need for some "civilizing tendency" which would leaven the heavy lump of rural life. And he bade us remember that "the best of us are polished cottagers".

To be an amateur naturalist is now everybody's hobby and we are all aware as never before of the pleasure and profit to be had from the intelligent appreciation of the countryside's wealth of bird, beast and flower. For this the praise—or no small part of it—must go to Jefferies, whose exact and delicate studies of these things were the first to open our eyes. But the countryside includes the people who work and live in it; and our debt to Jefferies should equally embrace his pertinent studies of these.



The old Mole catcher

E.R.P. STOCKTAKING

By ROLAND BIRD

IT is the French, this time, who have a word for it, perfectly expressive of the notion that economic aid is a meal ticket, dispensed by a rich nephew to a set of old uncles and aunts who have become fixed and shiftless in their ways. The word is *erpivore*, and it cynically summarizes the attitude of those who think in terms of aid to Europe, rather than co-operation by Europe. At this stage of the European Recovery Programme, the distinction between the two conceptions is gaining increasing force.

The Organization for European Economic Co-operation (O.E.E.C.) started with serious handicaps. To expect it to become a smoothly functioning machine overnight was, in the circumstances, a vain hope. It had major responsibilities thrust on it before it had premises or secretariat. At the outset, it was not quite certain whether the focus of responsibility would rest with the O.E.E.C. in Paris—whether it would be an executive instrument working under broad guidance from the United States or an experiment in co-operation by sovereign European governments. That issue is now clear. Mr. Hoffman's visit to Paris at the end of July came at an important moment, when there were doubts about both the efficiency of O.E.E.C. and the support which it was receiving from some of the participating countries, including Great Britain. The results of the visit were to confirm the official American view that O.E.E.C. must undertake responsibility for allocating E.C.A. grants between the sixteen.

The main business at Paris has been to fix the detailed programmes of aid—to allocate supplies from the United States and "off shore" purchases. If the sixteen were to fail in that task, the prospects of developing their work towards co-operation in Western Europe would indeed be small. Joint action in the sharing of aid is not simple, but it is far simpler than joint action towards recovery. The Americans were prepared to grant the aid on the assumption that Western Europe would be able to promote its own recovery. But the most important participants have been preoccupied, during the past summer, with their own domestic problems. Perhaps the Americans have failed to realize the perpetual state of near-crisis which afflicts us, and the French and even the Belgians—how we battle first with shortage of coal, then shortage of steel and always shortage of dollars, and have abundance only of money and credit. No doubt the short-circuiting of individual governments through O.E.E.C. has done something to obscure the position of the individual countries, as well as to give rather undue prominence to O.E.E.C. as a new super-sovereign body. Whatever the reason, when Mr. Paul Hoffman came to Paris in July, he was in a critical frame of mind. When he left, fortunately, he was reassured and optimistic. The lessons which have been learned in Paris since April should be applied in good time.

WHAT are the main lessons? First, undoubtedly, is the need to proceed with all speed towards the second—and as the Americans see it, the more important—aim of recovery rather than relief. This second aim is partly technical, but it leads finally to the essence of Western Union. In its more technical aspects, recovery depends partly on freeing the channels of trade between European countries. For twelve months or more, almost every European country has been on the defensive—hanging on to its reserves of hard currencies, balancing its trade bilaterally with every other country, and grudging the export of goods to European countries in return for inconvertible currencies which it could sell for dollars. Here it is evident that the Americans are prepared to learn from experience. Before the Economic Co-operation Administration was set up, many counsellors pointed out that a pool of dollars would do more to unclog the channels of intra-European trade than any negotiations aimed at multilateral trade. The advice was sound, but untimely; for American political thought could not bring itself to contemplate the notion of a "float" of

uncommitted dollars, doing their work in all kinds of unrecorded ways. Now the principle is admitted. Marshall dollars will be available to clear the balances of these inconvertible currencies; they will, in effect, be used to pay for "off shore" purchases in Europe itself. With a sufficient supply of dollars, a notable expansion of European trade should be possible. But the scheme is not without its risks. Just as Marshall grants have already encouraged some European countries to buy direct from the United States what they might have purchased in Europe, so the use of Marshall dollars for European trade clearing may tempt some countries to weaken their efforts to combat inflation and to increase their production. There is a risk that the countries which are still busy inflating may be able to export their inflation to those countries which are trying to combat it.

THE second lesson raises the problem of the kind of planning which O.E.E.C. is to undertake. The American public will require some tangible evidence of European planning for recovery before they sanction the second instalment of E.R.P.—quite apart from the third and fourth. What will satisfy them? Certainly, they will expect something beyond the efficient administration and allocation of Marshall grants. They will be thinking of their own deficiencies of raw materials and wondering what steps are being taken to augment the supplies of commodities like chrome, antimony, tin, rubber, quinine, graphite, nickel and (inevitably) uranium of which the United States is short. A Strategic Materials Division of E.C.A. has been set up in Paris to see that any surpluses of these commodities go to the United States, that their supplies are increased, and that American capital has a free hand in their development. This E.R.P. in reverse has so far attracted little attention in Europe. Some observers regard its appearance in the Marshall aid treaties as a mere token, but there is a good deal of evidence that the Americans take it seriously, and the more seriously they take it, the greater the amount of supplies which will eventually reach America from Europe. To some extent, this will involve selling commodities, not for dollars, but for payment from the currency trust funds which have been set up by the recipient countries, as the counterpart to E.C.A. grants. The special point for Britain is that for the purposes of E.C.A., Britain and the Colonies are to be treated as one entity. No doubt it is illogical to make grants of aid and then take in part return supplies of scarce commodities which could otherwise be sold for dollars. But friends who give help are not always consistent in their logic.

THIS certainly is one of the elements in the four-year plan of action which Mr. Hoffman has impressed upon the O.E.E.C., and some statement about reciprocal supplies of materials is likely to appear in the first instalment of the plan to go to Congress. The nature of this planning is important; "What I have in mind" (Mr. Hoffman has said) "is a programme of action, not a rigid and ponderous plan which tries to compress the life processes of a nation into a set of formulæ and a sheaf of statistical tables." That may be something of a change from the spate of statistics hitherto involved in the allocation of aid. The difficulty is that although the responsible American officials may themselves be satisfied with a programme of action, the American public will need more concrete evidence of achievement. And how is that to be measured? The whole object of E.C.A. is to increase the output and the trade of Europe. American eyes will be fastened on British coal output and exports, on the progress of the French textile industries, and the recovery of European heavy industry. All these are items capable of measurement. But there is a further element in the recovery of Western Europe of which, so far, there has been only one hint, and that several months ago. Sir Stafford Cripps then referred to changes in the industrial structure of Britain which might be required if European recovery and Western Union were to be brought to full fruition. He lifted one corner of the curtain on economic integration, without however suggesting in any detail what basic changes might be required. The principle behind these, at present, most vague suggestions is simply this:

Western European countries provide too small a market to permit the maximum economies of production. Each country makes its own cars, its own tractors, its own aircraft. If each could specialize (so runs the argument) and supply the rest, its productive efforts would produce a much bigger return.

IT is an argument acceptable enough as a general proposition. But when Country A allows Country B to make its heavy tractors, who makes its tanks in the event of war? How can this degree of specialization be contrived by negotiation between sovereign powers? Will the Western European countries be prepared to pool their sovereignty in a common economic effort? Will the positive gains in output be so obvious that the sacrifice of sovereignty is clearly worth paying? Here we contemplate the ultimate character of that Western Union which Mr. Bevin suggested. Yet it is the detail which is important, both in the fuller political association implied in Western Union and in the fuller economic association which lies behind E.R.P. If we measure the prospects of progress by the slow, hard work which has brought Benelux to its present state of uncompleted development, the chances of wider integration in Western Europe seem indefinitely remote. But the compulsions are frantically urgent. We have one year's assurance of American aid, and the contingent promise of three more years' assistance. On the best assumptions, 1952 is the year when we must be able to stand on our own feet. We cannot be certain whether Europe will be viable by that time. There are plenty of grounds for fearing that the cost of securing necessary imports from the Western Hemisphere will, even then, exceed Europe's capacity to pay for them; that Europe may not succeed in awaking its productive energies or increasing its output and trade; and that America itself may still be combining the inconsistent roles of the world's greatest exporter and the world's greatest creditor.

ONE thing is certain. Well before 1952, many of the factors we now take for granted will have changed. What would happen if a settlement should be reached with Russia? Will the United States be prepared to invest commercial capital in Britain and the Colonies? If it does, will the British Government be prepared to encourage such investment instead of treating it with distaste? Britain has a dual responsibility—to provide much of the coal and capital goods for European recovery and also to supply capital goods to the Dominions in payment for current supplies of food and materials. To serve both claimants on our productive capacity will be a superhuman task. Yet we dare not fail in either. To fail to meet the requirements of the Commonwealth countries for capital goods might mean driving them into the American economic orbit and depriving ourselves of essential supplies of food and materials. No risks can be taken there, and it is important to realize how far the Commonwealth countries have gone in supplying Britain in the expectation of shipments of industrial equipment, and how far the Dominions have pruned their drawings on the dollars which still remain in the sterling area pool. These economic relations between Britain and the Commonwealth have been severely tested and have stood most strains. They work because there is understanding and goodwill. European Recovery is no substitute for them. But it is an additional obligation for Britain, which must provide a large part of the heavy capital goods—the electric plant, transport equipment, the tractors and the mining machinery —on which recovery in Europe must be founded. These are precisely the manufactures for which the Commonwealth looks to us, and of which we are grievously short ourselves.

HERE then is the challenge. It is greatly to increase the output of the heavy industries in Britain in order to consolidate our economic links with the Commonwealth and at the same time to lay the foundation for European recovery. It will be a slow and hard job, but on it depends the issue whether Britain is to return, within a mere four years, to something of its old independence and prosperity, by helping others to recover, or whether Europe will collapse into jangling rivalries and the ties of the Commonwealth weaken to the point of disaster.

Short Story

PORTRAIT OF A CROONER

By ALEC WAUGH

I HAD met Louis in London, in the spring of '27, when the "bright young people" period was at its flood.

Tall, supple, copper-hued, with bold eyes, very white teeth, and a voice that was amply adequate at a time when that kind of voice—a throaty, barbaric whisper—was essential not only to every restaurateur's but to every hostess's success, he was one of the more discussed personalities in the gossip-column world of Bloomsbury. He was a typical West Indian crooner and for several months the bright young people had had "a thing" about coloured artists. Florence Mills and Robeson were in London. Layton and Johnston were at the Café de Paris. In Grafton Street "Hutch" was singing his nursery rhymes series at Chez Victor. The Pavilion night after night was packed. *Nigger Heaven* was high in the best-seller lists. The Black Crow records had just arrived. It was not only an artistic but a social boom. No party was a party without its Black Birds. A lift was going up: any number of people contrived to climb on it. Louis was one of the first ones on.

It would have been astonishing if such a success had not turned his head. He was a bare twenty-three. Two years earlier he had been a waiter in a Montmartre café. He behaved, as he could have been expected to behave, like a drunken man: arrogant, truculent, overbearing. His swagger became a challenge. His bold eyes grew insolent. He pitched his singing on a note of courtship. On the least appropriate occasions he would display an initialed cigarette case. "Mary gave me this: charming of her, don't you think? You know her, of course: Lady Mary Shrewton. A most agreeable lady." And his eyelids would lower; not a wink, no; but as though he had withdrawn into an intimate recollective trance. Even those who were least restrained in their enthusiasm for Black Birds admitted that Louis was too much of a good thing.

He was impossible, undeniably. Yet there were things about him that one could not help liking. He had a freshness of enthusiasm, a disarming and engaging candour. One liked him, in fact, for the things he would have hated to be liked for. He was so proud of his sophistication.

At the time of our first meeting I had recently returned from a year of travel. My host had asked me a question about Tahiti. Louis had listened for a moment with a show of interest, then interrupted.

"Tahiti. Yes, that's well enough. But you should see *my* island. You should see St. Lucia."

It was typical. Yet I resented the note of contemptuous patronage on which he had cut across my description no more than I should have resented the nursery interruption of an eager and impatient schoolboy.

"They call St. Lucia the jewel of the West Indies," he hurried on. "But very few people ever see it. Tourist ships may call there, but only for an hour or so, and then only at Castries. To see the real St. Lucia you should go where there aren't wharfs and houses. You should go where the country's wild. You should go to my part of the island, to the south, to Souffrère."

Not only his voice was glowing, but his eyes. He reminded me of Josephine Baker. "J'ai deux amours: mon pays et Paris."

"No tourist ever goes there," he continued. "It's under the Pitons; you must have read of them; those cone-shaped mountains that rise sheer out of the sea. It's half a village: a fishing village, with small boats and nets hanging out to dry. But it's a town as well, with a cobbled

square beside the jetty, with a great banyan tree to shade it; and at the end of the main street there's a church. That's where I was born—Souffrère. We had a house on the waterfront, with a clock handed down by my great-grandfather; it had a little soldier in red uniform who came out and struck the hours on a drum. The square was always crowded, with fishermen, with peasants coming down from the hills to ship their fruit. I had an accordion. In the evenings I would sing; the boys would join in the choruses. The women would work on the men's nets. The girls would dance; they'd be wearing their native costume, the French madras. The sun would be setting and the air'd be cool. That is the real St. Lucia."

He paused: his voice had taken on a deep, rich tone, a tone that explained not only his success but the nature of his success. It was easy to understand how at certain moments to certain people he could be irresistible. He was not only a satyr, he was Pan as well.

"Sometimes, when I'm singing at my restaurant"—and I smiled, wondering how Henri would like to hear Louis talking of "my restaurant"—"sometimes, when it's late, when the air's hot and smoky, I close my eyes, I think myself back again on to my doorstep, in the cool of the evening, with the fishermen and the peasant girls; I think myself back among them. My heart *is* in my singing then."

He had actually closed his eyes while he was speaking. I, too, closed mine. Behind the darkness of their lids I relived a Tahitian evening; at Taravoa; a Chrysler parked beside a Chinese store. The strumming on a banjo. The wash of water on a reef. The glint of moonlight on the palm fronds. The soft Polynesian voices. The sweet, heavy scent of the *tiare*. From my knowledge of other islands I could picture his. "One day I'm going to St. Lucia," I told myself.

IT was in the spring of 1927 that I made that vow. But it was not till the winter of '38 that I fulfilled it. And much was to happen in those eleven years. From a world of wars and threats of war, of pogroms and concentration camps, of swastikas and sickles, the bright young people period of the '20's was to seem centuries remote: so remote that it was impossible to realize that it was only eleven years since these same serious minded disputants of rival ideologies had had "a thing" about coloured crooners; impossible to realize that a name like Louis' had ever figured in the gossip columns.

In those eleven years I had only seen him once, shortly before I sailed for the West Indies, in a Soho night club called The Alcove. I had no idea that he was working there. I had no idea for that matter that such a place existed. It was a "joint". The kind of joint that you could only find in a city such as London, whose drink regulations make it impossible for any reputable restaurant to stay open after two o'clock; the kind of place to which the average Londoner would never think of going more than once a year; of which he will say next morning, "I can't think why on earth I went."

It was like all those places—a single, long room on a basement floor; some twenty tables drawn along a wall; a small square of polished boarding; a piano at one end; no band; the air thick with smoke; a few tinselly decorations; at the head of the stairs a military-looking man in a tail-coat proffering a form to the effect that you had been invited by Captain Ferguson to a bottle-party and had contributed five shillings to its cost. Whisky was on sale at two pounds a quart; to be purchased by the bottle. A drab and dreary spot. Louis was its attraction.

It was a shock to see him there. I had known that he had come down in the world, but I had not known that he had come down so far. I had heard that he had lost his looks, but I had not suspected that he had "gone off" so much. He had not probably in actual weight put on more than a dozen pounds, but he had lost his lean, panther look. And there is a camel-hair's difference between ugliness and beauty—a milligram less, a millimetre more. He was Pan no longer. He was a satyr; gross and heavy footed. He could not have faced the hard spotlights of a restaurant. Only in such a place as this, ill-lit and smoky, could he

retain his glamour. Even here his voice seemed throaty.

I had met him a bare half-dozen times. I half hoped that he would not remember me. It would embarrass him, I felt, to be reminded by the presence of an old acquaintance of his days of prominence. But it was with a brazen grin, displaying his fine row of teeth, that he came across to me.

"This is swell. This certainly is swell. Why haven't we seen you here before? Everyone comes here now. It's nice, isn't it? Intimate? Not like those big, noisy places. You must bring your friends along. We always have good fun here. To-night. . . ." He paused, looked round him, shook his head. "No, there's not much here to-night. But sometimes, you should see. . . ." He half closed his eyes, in that way of his.

Across the smoky room he caught a summoning glance—a female glance. With the old arrogance he took his leave of me. With the old insolence he swaggered across the room. I watched him as he leant across the table, his neck creased in a heavy roll above his collar. As I foresaw the inevitable stages by which he must drop from one shoddy platform to another, I could not but remember the old Greek theme of retribution, of those who invited the god's wrath by likening themselves to gods.

A FEW weeks later I sailed for the West Indies.

Louis was in my mind when I arranged to stop over at St. Lucia between boats. He was in my mind when I booked a passage on the small motor-launch that every afternoon runs south from Castries.

I understood his nostalgia then. Set in the wide semicircle of a bay, with towering mountains at its back, with the guardian Pitons on the right, Souffrère in a catalogued description might sound a melancholy, overshadowed place. It is not, though. It is friendly, cosy, intimate; with its grove of coco-nuts; its fishing nets; its sports ground fringed with casuarians; its banyan tree on the right of the jetty to shade the cobbled square; its church at the end of its centre street to give it an air of Switzerland.

As the launch drew level with the jetty a number of urchins, bare-footed, with ragged shirts and shapeless hats, rushed forward, clamorous for our bags. Twenty years back Louis must have looked like that, must have run forward just like that, touching his hat. "Your bag, sah. Douglas Fairbanks, sah, that's me." Running my eye along the row of chattering faces I wondered whether for any of them a fate so romantic waited; to travel so far, to reach so high, to fall so fast.

His mother, I was told, had died; but there was an aunt left, living with a cousin in her sister's house. It was in a side street, not, as Louis had told me, on the square. It had two rooms, curtains and some furniture. It was not actually dirty. A visiting member of the Royal Commission might indeed have considered it with approval. "The home, I presume, of the rather better kind of fisherman." It was only when I remembered that flashing of an engraved cigarette-case across a fashionable table that in contrast it seemed squalid.

The aunt was very old, very infirm; her body shrunken with age, so that her head appeared top-heavy—she was suffering probably from some kind of dropsy. She was a macabre object, sitting in a high-backed rocking-chair, in a shawl, with a long skirt falling over the hems of innumerable petticoats round swollen ankles.

She shook her head when I spoke of Louis.

No, he never wrote. When his mother had died, yes, he had been kind then. He had sent some money. They had put up a nice gravestone. I should go and see it. But apart from that, no, not one word in all these years. The Empire broadcasts gave them their sole news of him. He sang once a fortnight. He would be singing to-morrow night. On the mantelpiece was a photograph, cut from the *Radio Times*, and pasted on a sheet of cardboard. "He hasn't altered at all. He looks the same dear boy. I wish he could find some nice girl and settle down." I examined the photograph. It had come from the file-room, clearly. It must be at least ten years' old. Beside the rocking-chair was an early nineteenth-century

spinet. Remembering how Louis had talked of the crowds that had gathered under the bunyan tree at sundown, I supposed that his singing must be missed in Souffrère; but his aunt shook her head. Louis had run away at twelve, signed on a French boat as cabin boy. They remembered him here, if they remembered him at all, as a no-account fellow who would not work, who only cared for music. The parson's daughter used to give him lessons. But no one else had noticed him.

I was surprised, but I should not have been. It was in character that during these early months of struggle, first as a cabin boy, then in Paris as a waiter, the main spur to his ambition should have been the resolve to prove his real worth to the cousins who had despised him. It was only natural that when he had fought his way to a position from which he could afford to remember their contempt with a smile, he should dramatize, should visualize his success in terms of a subject, conquered Souffrère.

I rose to my feet. Once the rough walls of this cabin had housed ambition of sufficient power to carry such an urchin as had besieged the motor launch that afternoon to the bizarre destiny of boastfully flashed silver cases. I looked about me, missing something. The clock: where could that have gone? A chuckle came from the vast nodded head. "So he told you about that? The clock with the soldier that beat the hours. Fancy his remembering. But of course he would. He'd sit and stare for minutes before each hour so as not to miss it.

"But where is it now?"

"Where it always was. The Rectory."

"Then it wasn't yours?"

"Could we afford a clock like that? Louis only went to the Rector's Bible classes so that he could look at it. We used to say that it was the only reason that he took music lessons from the Rector's daughter."

And that, too, was in the picture.

THE next day my host took me for a ride over the mountains to Guilese. A rought three hours' ride over a succession of intersecting valleys. There was no road; just a track, cut away by streams, winding round the side of mountains with a sheer drop on the far side; so narrow that every so often we would have to get off and lead our horses. Groups of peasants carrying huge bunches of bananas passed us on their way to the coast. An occasional youth with a shot-gun showed us a bag of pigeon. The path led us through Fond St. Jaques; a group of cabins with children playing under trees, women tending babies, hens wandering at large, pigs tethered against stakes. It was very simple, very primitive, but very clean. It had a casual, South Sea atmosphere. The men would be lucky to work three days a week on the plantations; they would be paid fifteen pence for a day's work, their daughters and wives a shilling. But they had their gardens, they had their allotments, they could raise their own crops, keep their pigs and poultry. They grumbled, but they were not unhappy.

It was from circumstances such as these that Louis' original ancestors had come. He was ashamed of that jungle background; and no doubt the house in Souffrère with its two rooms, its furniture, its spinet, represented from one point of view an advance in progress. But there was no doubt as to which life was the cleaner, happier, healthier: the life of "civilization" in the narrow alleys of the town, or this primitive existence in the clear air of the bush. Nor could there be any doubt as to the way of living from which Louis, as every other coloured artist, had drawn his strength. The depth and power in his voice had sprung out of nostalgia; was the cry of an exiled spirit. And as I rode on I pondered such reactionary reflections as have fretted most of those who have been brought into touch with primitive native life. To what purpose, I asked myself, do we educate these simple people, unfitting them for the life to which the centuries have trained them, transporting them into an alien world, where even such a success as Louis' is purchased at a price whose payment must be in the end regretted?

Our road back lay through the town, along the waterfront. The sun was low in the sky. The air was cool. The work of the day was finished. A large miscellaneous group

was gathered in the square; women sewing at the nets; fishermen puffing at their pipes; children tumbling over each other in the gutters; young men lounging against the trees; old women on their doorsteps in their native costume, the French madras; girls in groups, chattering and giggling; a couple of policemen, very smart and upright in their black tunics and white belts. There was a buzz of talk. But louder than the buzz of talk came the sound of music. "What's this?" I asked, " awake?" My host shook his head. "Only the radio with a loud speaker. They often come out here in the evening."

Then I remembered. The Empire broadcast: Louis. "Let's stop," I said.

We waited, listened. The organ voluntary concluded. The voice of the announcer crackled through a blur of static; then the static stopped. A rich, full voice came through it: a familiar voice. A song that was ten years' old, "That's my weakness now".

Did one person in that noisy group realize whose voice they heard? Clear and full it rang across the square:

> I never cared for eyes of blue,
> But she's got eyes of blue,
> And that's my weakness now.

The buzz of talk subsided. A couple began to dance. It was just such a scene as Louis had described to me.

I pictured him three thousand miles away. It would be ten o'clock in London. He would resent having to go out into the cold of a January night. He would be taking it very casually: an Empire broadcast: a small fee. He would resent having to accept such work. He would be in his ordinary day clothes. Shabby clothes, most likely, for he only needed to look smart at night; clothes cut to an earlier fashion that fitted him too tightly. As likely as not he would be unshaven. There would be no audience in the studio. He would take off his coat and collar. Standing there, half-dressed, there would be nothing to distinguish him from these cousins of his grouped here under the banyan tree. Had he the imagination to picture them there, listening? I doubted it. His mind would already be upon the evening's work. The songs he would sing. The guests that would be there. His eyes would brighten at the thought of a blonde who had come there three nights running with a dreary and surely unimportant escort. As his eyes brightened, a new richness would come into his voice, so that three thousand miles away along a waterfront young couples across a cobbled square would smile into each other's eyes.

Here was his ambition realized: his boyhood's dream. The cousins who had mocked him were summoned to the square, to be held there subjugated by his voice. Before me was the gay coloured throng. In my ears the rhythm of that rich full voice. Before memory's eye a shabby, discredited figure by a microphone.

The music stopped. The announcer had taken Louis' place. Another performer was beckoned across the studio. I pictured Louis pulling a muffler round his throat, hurrying out into the cold to the small bed-sitting room in his Bloomsbury lodging-house to bath and shave and change to take his place at the piano in the Alcove. And a passage from an early Cannan novel crossed my memory, a passage to the effect that we always get out of life the thing we ask for, but never "according to the letter of our desire".

NOTES FROM OVERSEAS

Mr. C. E. Mott-Radcliffe, M.P., has recently returned from a visit to Greece, and the following are his impressions.

THE estimated strength of the guerrilla forces in Greece is roughly 25,000. Of these 25,000, between 8,000 and 10,000 are concentrated in the Grammos Mountains round Markos' H.Q. in properly organized military formations. Their positions are well dug in and camouflaged with good fields of fire. They have a plentiful supply of mines of all types and an abundance of light automatic weapons. The close proximity of the Albanian frontier greatly facilitates their tactics. Although shell fire from guerrilla artillery is intermittent, suggesting a shortage of ammunition, Markos could not possible have amassed the amount of ammunition of all types which he is now using against the Greek Army, had it not been for substantial outside assistance in the past.

All normal life is paralysed in the areas where the guerrilla bands are operating and, during the hours of darkness, mines are laid on roads, telephone wires cut and raids made on outlying villages. Men are sleeping in the fields in order to avoid the risk of forcible recruitment during these raids. Consequently, journeys from one village to another are hazardous except by convoy with a mine detector on the leading vehicle.

THE Greek Army consists of about 147,000 men and a further 50,000 comprise the National Defence Corps, which is the equivalent of our own Home Guard. Ninety per cent of the equipment of the Greek Army is British in origin, though this proportion will alter when the volume of American assistance reaches its peak.

In the middle of June an operation was launched by six Greek Divisions against the main core of guerrilla resistance in the Grammos area with the object of bringing "General" Markos to final battle. False optimism as to the speed with which these operations can be conducted should, I think, be avoided. Although the Greek Army has overwhelming superiority of artillery support and effective assistance from the Greek Air Force, the guerrilla positions are difficult to locate and many shells can be fired on to mountain slopes without inflicting casualties upon the enemy. It is predominantly an infantryman's war and both Greek Army and the guerrillas are fighting very hard. So far, satisfactory progress has been made. The British and American Military Missions are rendering very valuable assistance to the Greek Army but the American Economic Mission is, so to speak, the generating plant, since all equipment and supplies are now paid for by American dollars, and Mr. Griswold until recently head of this Mission, has had to execute a judgment of Solomon upon the relative requirements of military and civil expenditure.

ALONGSIDE the guerrilla war an economic battle is raging. The latter will increase in intensity as soon as the former is over. Gold sovereigns are the only currency in which any Greek has any confidence to-day. The measure of inflation can best be estimated by the fact that in March of this year commodity prices were 308 times the 1939 level.

Costs of production are consequently high and these have rendered it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for Greece to sell many of her products in world markets at competitive prices. Even olive oil is being hoarded by the peasants as an alternative currency to the gold sovereign. The hoarding of olive oil is not, of course, a new feature in Greece. Neither Bulgarians, Germans nor Italians succeeded, during the various periods of occupation, in wringing olive oil out of the peasants.

ONE of the most difficult problems will be the re-settlement of 700,000 refugees who are now congregated in camps near the larger towns. It is essential that these men

and women should be persuaded, as soon as the military situation permits, to return to their villages and to cultivate the land. This presents greater difficulties, in my view, than the Greek authorities will admit. In the first place, it will require an assurance that there is no further danger of attacks by guerrillas, an assurance which is not easy to give, since there can be no possible guarantee, even if Markos is completely defeated, that fresh raids will not be made next Summer from over the Albanian frontier. This is one of the many problems, the solution of which lies in Moscow and in Moscow alone.

Secondly, one cannot ignore the fact that most of these villagers have, for the first time in their lives, experienced such fruits of civilization as the larger towns like Larissa can provide, and they may well be unwilling to exchange urban life for the seclusion of their shattered mountain villages. In any case, the cost of re-settlement will be enormous.

Similar camps have also been provided for the children who have been evacuated from the areas threatened by the guerrillas. They are being well-looked after by voluntary organizations with Government financial assistance and the Queen has raised a very large sum of money for the Children's Relief Fund. Many of their brothers and sisters have fared less happily. In addition at least 10,000 children (some sources put the figure much higher) have been forcibly removed from their homes and families by the guerrillas and transported behind the Iron Curtain.

Greece is predominantly a peasant country and, like all peasant countries, the unit around which her economy is largely built is the village unit. Unlike any previous invading army in Greece, the guerrillas have, over wide areas, broken up village life, together with the smaller unit, namely that of the family, thereby creating a social as well as an economic problem of considerable magnitude.

IT is probable, I think, that the present coalition between Sophoulis and Tsaldaris will hang together until the operations against the guerrillas are completed. As in 1940, the Greeks are united against a threat to their independence. Once this threat is removed, political intrigue and dissension will again break out. The question of the Monarchy is no longer an issue, except among a very small minority, and the prestige of the King and, particularly of the Queen, is very high indeed. Nor is there any talk of *rapprochement* with the Extreme Left.

When we express a pious wish to see an effective parliamentary democracy established in Greece, we must keep a sense of perspective. Our own parliamentary machine has been functioning by trial and error for the best part of six hundred years and, up till one hundred years ago, it was by no means free from corruption. The Left Wing intellectuals in England have been loud in their cry for a coalition government in Greece "in which all parties loyally collaborate" (blessed phrase). Yet the Left in England were not even prepared to prolong the Coalition Government in this country until the end of the war with Japan. Greece, on the other hand, has been independent for little more than one hundred years, and during that period she has been involved in three Balkan Wars, two Great Wars, occupation by enemy troops and Civil War.

The fact remains that, in recent years, more progress was achieved in Greece during the two periods when one man arose head and shoulders above his fellow-creatures, both in ability and ruthlessness, than at any other time. Venezelos' powers were surrounded by certain parliamentary camouflage; Metaxas discarded these trappings. Besides these two, the minor political adventurers who came and went during the inter-war period as one attempt at a *coup d'état* succeeded another fade into oblivion.

WE must also face facts squarely. If the independence of Greece is of vital importance to the United States, to ourselves, or indeed to Western Civilization, then we should not shirk the logical implications of our intervention in that unhappy country. In other words, we must finish the job properly. To pull out as soon as the guerrilla war is over and to abandon her through the subsequent and vital reconstruction period would be the height of futility.

"To this he made his way with all possible speed."

THE TAY AND ITS WILD LIFE

By "B.B."

THE Tay, the longest river in Scotland, completes a journey of one hundred and seventeen miles from its source on the borders of Perthshire and Argyllshire to its entry into the North Sea at Dundee. It flows first to Loch Dochart, and from thence through lovely Glen Dochart to Loch Tay where, for the first time, it takes the name of Tay. It is difficult to say where any great river has its first beginnings, so many tributary feeders make up its stature.

Earn, Tummel, Lyon, Bran, Almond, Dochart (principal feeder), all these lesser rivers are famous for their salmon and trout, all go to make Tay one of the most important fishing rivers in the North; it has been the main highway of the salmon for generations and holds records for very big fish, some of which are almost legendary. A sixty-four pounder was taken in Glendivine water by Miss G. W. Ballantine on 7th October, 1922. Hooked in the Boat Pool it took nearly two hours to land and was lured by a spinning bait. Another of sixty-one and a half pounds was caught on a worm below Perth in 1907; fifty and forty pounders are too numerous to mention. The record for Tay was caught in the nets at Newburgh, in 1869, and is thought by many to be the "Bishop Browne Salmon". The story of this great fish deserves retelling.

In 1868, a Bishop G. F. Browne, Bishop of Stepney, made the discovery that salmon could be caught by phantom minnows. Before this date nobody seems to have experimented with artificial minnow in the Tay.

On the last day of the season, 1868, the good bishop set forth from the mouth of the Earn in a boat, accompanied by three companions and a gillie. At 12.30 a salmon was hooked and, by the power of its runs, was taken to be a fish of great size. It first towed the boat all over the Tay and then made a dash for the Earn, evidently intending to run up it, but after a battle of an hour and a half, it was turned. It then made off for the north bank of the river, still towing the boat. Very soon the party

found themselves among the shipping at Newburgh and excitement began to mount.

At 3.30 the fight was still on and the salmon showed no signs of weakening. After another four hours it jumped for the first time and was noted to be "about the size of a well-grown boy". The line began to wear and during a lull in the battle a stronger line was spliced on. By this time darkness had come. Nine o'clock, ten o'clock, and still the fight went on, bishop and salmon were showing signs of strain. At 10.30, after a struggle which had lasted ten and a half hours, the salmon came under the boat and the line parted.

A year later the seventy-four pounder was caught in the nets at Newburgh and in its mouth was the scar of a hook. This fish may well have been the "Bishop Browne Salmon".

BELOW Perth the river widens rapidly until, near the mouth, it is three miles across. On the north shore, at various points between Port Allen and Kingoodie, the vast reed beds begin. These have been formed by stone breakwaters which extend out over the ooze for over one hundred yards. When they were built seems uncertain, they may have been constructed by the Dutch, or at least under Dutch supervision, though Mr. W. Malloch of Perth, with whom I discussed the matter, thinks that it was local labour. A few facts have been given me by the City Librarian.

Apparently, up till 1780 the river had made such serious inroads upon the lands of Errol that houses and farms had to be twice removed to safety. In 1836 extensive embankments were made along the foreshore of Port Allen which reclaimed over one hundred acres of valuable farming land. Mr. John Allen, of Errol Park, is also known to have planted reeds opposite his property in the same year. It seems most likely that the stone breakwaters, or groins, were originally constructed to prevent "scour", and the reeds planted in an effort to reclaim land.

On the north bank of the river, on its lower reaches, these acres of tall plumed reeds form almost impenetrable thickets and were valuable for thatching. In the old days I have seen men, in flat-bottomed scows, busy reed cutting, and at the high tides, when the craft could be manœuvred close to the beds, the bundles of reed were taken aboard and floated down to Kingoodie. Tay reeds were considered superior to Norfolk reeds for thatching purposes.

IN the ancient uncut beds the old growth forms a breast-high barricade. Like trees in a neglected forest they lie one upon another, interlaced and interlocked, and

"With half-closed wings they plummet downwards." (The spectacular "falling leaf" manœurve of wild geese).

through this breastwork rises the new growth. What a wondrous sight are their feathery heads when seen in the low light of a setting winter sun! The whole area shimmers with a translucent radiance which almost dazzles the eye. Throughout the winter months these reedy jungles are the roosting place of myriads of starlings. As evening falls, and the grey twilight gathers thick over the river, one is startled by a sudden sibilant rush overhead as party after party of birds pass by, each individual moving simultaneously, twisting and turning as if at a word of command. And when night draws off the hills one may sometimes hear a fairy-like concert as of numberless elfin harps. These are linnets and finches which, like the starlings, resort to the reeds for sleep.

From time to time one is startled by a sudden penetrating squeal, as of a creature in its death agony. It is the cry of the little water-rail, a mouse-like bird which used to be common on the lower reaches of the river. Since the terrible winter of 1947, however, their numbers have decreased. They are hard to flush and have their runs under the tangled herbage, even a good dog cannot put them up.

Pheasants, strays from adjacent parks, are quite at home in the reed beds. According to the keeper in whose company I essayed to shoot the wild geese, some become entirely river birds. The pheasant is, in its natural state, a lover of water, and once they take to the river it will be a clever man who can bag one; they are rarely flushed and are only seen and heard at roosting time. Capercailzie, by nature a forest loving species, have been seen, and occasionally a bittern, though these latter birds are very rare so far north.

Once, when I was threading my way down a narrow alley of reeds, I came upon the head of a stag. It was quite fresh, and how it had come there I cannot guess. Some poacher perhaps in a far-away glen had killed it and thrown the head into the river, or tributary river, and the floods had borne it down and high tides had washed it above high water mark. On another occasion, a lovely cock hen-harrier floated low over me, while scores of terrified finches fell like a shower of pebbles all around me and sat upon the reeds like little carven images, petrified with fear as the dove-grey, round-winged, beauty swept by against the evening sky.

IN winter the lower reaches of the river have their wader population, snipe, curlews, whimbrel and an occasional godwit. Redshanks were once very common, but of late years they have almost entirely disappeared and I am quite at a loss to know the reason. The curlew also are not plentiful, save at one point near Dundee, where there is a small bay. Out in the river is a rock which is only visible at low water. This forms a roosting place for curlew, they wait there in a solid throng until the muds and sands are bared by the falling tide; but I rarely see them higher up the river. By day they feed in the low green fields inland, golden plover and lapwing with them, but even the last two species are not common, and one does not see the varied bird life that one finds upon Solway shores, nor are the varieties of duck and geese so interesting as in the latter locality.

White - fronted geese are occasional wanderers, brent very rare, and of late years the pink-footed goose has become erratic in its appearance. When I first knew the Tay twelve years or so ago, the "pinks" were the commonest geese, but with the building of Errol aerodrome they were scared from their feeding grounds on the carse. I have seen airmen flying low over the sand-banks purposely putting the geese on the wing. The "pinks" hate disturbance during their resting periods and have never mastered their fear of planes, whatever other writers may say.

With the graylags it is different. They are not so nervous as the "pinks", nor do they display the sagacity of the latter species when flighting to and from the river. I have seen them flop off the fields at dusk within easy gunshot of the bank. They are, I believe, lazy by nature. The "pinks" travel many miles over the hills to feed, the grays find their pasturage on the carse, choosing

the largest fields where they will remain all day if undisturbed.

So many writers have spread abroad the story of wild geese posting sentries. I can only say I have never observed any *systematic* posting of sentries. At times I have seen a party of fifteen or so grays feeding quite peacefully in the middle of a field and not a single bird has had its head raised, some have even been asleep.

IN January one often experiences three or four days of spring-like weather in this district, days when, though there may be snow on the Sidlaws and frost on the higher ground, the carse is soft and green, when the sun shines warmly, and blackbirds and thrushes may be heard trying a few tentative staves. These rare hours are well loved by the "lazy grays". You may see them resting contentedly on the sward, portly and at ease, some with orange bills tucked into their backs, others idly cropping as they sit. As a rule two or more birds will have their heads up, and no bird feeds for long without taking a careful look round.

Sometimes a farm-hand will seek out such a feeding ground on a Saturday afternoon and, concealing himself in a dyke, will await the birds as they come in to their well-loved field. In front of him will be one or two stuffed geese set up in the grass and he will wait for the grays to alight before pressing trigger. He will often kill three or four at one discharge, a ghastly and unsporting way of shooting these lovable sagacious fowl, and this slaughter goes on in the close season unchecked.

Luckily there are so many big estates along these lower reaches of the Tay that the "shore popper" is forbidden and the farmers, like the farmers around the Wash, are not in the habit of giving permission to shooters. The chances of bagging a goose below high water are very remote for there are no extensive marshes such as one finds on the Solway and consequently the "shore popper" keeps away. Mallard are present in considerable numbers but come in at flight time on such a wide front that it is seldom they offer a chance. Widgeon are rarely seen beyond the mouth of the river as there are no beds of zostera, and no grass marshes for grazing.

Though the varieties of wild fowl are not so numerous as elsewhere, the sight of the wild geese in such lovely surroundings is a satisfying thing, even though you cannot hunt them. The tangling pinkfoot skeins can sometimes be seen crossing the rich and fertile carse, bound for their feeding grounds over the snow clad hills. They have a long climb before them and must rise to eight hundred feet before they see the promised lands beyond. I have stood on the crest of these pine clad hills, seeing before me the distant Tay gleaming beyond the rich arable lands below, and have noted the oncoming skeins. How slowly they seemed to travel! now bunching and bundling, now stringing out, laboriously beating up for the very summit on which I stood. At first, through powerful glasses, one can look down upon their grey shoulders and wide flapping wings, soon they are up and on a level with the eye, and some minutes later you are looking at their brownish breasts and white sterns as the whole skein sweeps grandly overhead.

Where you stand the frost sparkles on the road and upon the tasselled boughs of the firs, icicles hang beside murmuring burns, red beech leaves are crisp with rime. But down on the carse there is no frost or snow, the rich dark earth is soft, iceless flood pools are ruffled by the wind, and the same conditions obtain on the other side of the Sidlaws. Once over the crest these majestic birds can set their wings in a glide which will take them six miles or more to some sequestered pasture which they know and use each day. In the evening they come back, toiling with full bellies up and over the same cold crest, and with what glad chiming cries they hail the sight of the river and the sand banks where they will pass the night!

THE graylags, as I have said, do not habitually cross the hills to feed but find their pasturage on the wide strath of the carse. Nevertheless I have often seen small parties of five or six birds crossing these hills from the river. They are probably seeking some mountain loch where they may

"A lovely cock hen-harrier floated over me."

pass the day. All wild geese must have access to fresh water sometime during the twenty-four hours for they are cleanly birds and prefer fresh water to salt for bathing. At night, when all is quiet, they come in from the river to the "plick plack", that narrow band of mud and short reeds which supplies them with food in the shape of the reed tubers. These roots are like small potatoes and I have seen the throat of a goose full of them; in hard weather when the pastures are frozen these reed tubers form their staple diet. On rough nights, also, they will rest in the "plick plack" and sometimes, if the weather is very boisterous, they will even come into the fringe of high reeds. There they roost both snug and warm all the night through. As soon as dawn flushes the eastern sky they slowly walk out to the sands or, if the tide be in, they will swim out. They then seek the burns where fresh water runs and will bathe and gambol until the sun has cleared the hills. The loud beating of their wings whilst they are busy at their toilet carries clearly over the smooth tide. I love watching these early morning ablutions of the grey geese. From time to time they cackle and shout until perhaps the boom of a punt gun stills them in fear, and then for a space complete silence falls.

When the high tides wash over the "plick plack", even the tall reeds are submerged, or nearly so, only the plumed tops are visible above the flood. It is then the unwary wanderer must exercise caution lest he be cut off from the river bank, treacherous gullies wind hither and thither in the reed forests and one may find oneself marooned. It is also easy to get "bushed" in these vast brittle thickets for their feathery tops are far above one's head and all sense of direction can be lost at night, or in thick mist.

When the first fogs of winter roll in from the North Sea and the hoarse "boomp! boomp!" of steamers out beyond Buddon Ness echo over the sand flats, the winter migrants arrive weary with travel, to break their long fast on the berries of windblown thorns. Fieldfares in their thousands throng the inland hedges, redwings with them, and in some years waxwings are common, I saw a flock in January, 1947. These crested strangers sit about upon the wild rose bushes plucking the orange berries which, in size and shape, resemble veterinary worming

pills. These they devour greedily and the stone is later ejected. The keeper told me that the countrymen catch them by means of a long wand tipped with bird lime, for the waxwing is a foolish trusting bird and will allow of close approach. The wand is gently advanced until the bird is held fast by the cruel glue. Every day in winter one may see merlins, those swift drab falcons, hunting the reed beds, scattering the small birds like chaff as they sweep over.

IN hard weather ice floes and miniature icebergs form in the river. I remember one moonlit night, during a hard frost, hearing the continuous grinding roar of the floes as the incoming tide jostled the crusty cakes together, a sound which must be familiar to the wild geese whose breeding place is in the Arctic circle. At such times the wide creeks and tributary burns are frozen, and when the tide flows the great pressure bursts the thick skin of ice. In the quiet of night the stupendous bangs and cracks are quite awe-inspiring. Then the geese leave the Tay, and I miss their music; there is no feed for them, either on the fields, or among the reeds, and the only geese you will see are the cripples, pitiful victims of the punt gunner's deadly hail. Some of these birds regain their health and flight, others die lingering deaths and are eaten by the crows; those vultures of the tideline are ever on the prowl for wounded birds. A healthy goose has his own place in the skein, but once he is sick or maimed he must remain apart, as if he were unclean. I have seen a gaggle resting on the sand banks and another single maimed goose land amongst them. Promptly his erstwhile companions attacked him and drove him off.

The old big geese lead the skeins, and it is fascinating to watch them coming in from the sea. The first few hundred yards of foreshore are scanned by the leader with the utmost care, his sharp experienced eye misses little; even a tide-tossed stump, half hidden in the reeds, will make him veer and croak a low alarm and with zig-zag flight he will lead his grey company in by a safe road.

I lately witnessed an amusing happening as a skein was passing high overhead. It was led, as is usual, by one big goose much larger than the rest, and close behind it was a smaller bird which must have possessed a great deal of character. This lesser fowl wished to dispute the right of leadership. Flying with more rapid wing beats it overhauled the leader and endeavoured to take its place. Such an affront was not to be borne. The old gander, who had possibly come to the Tay for very many seasons, soon put it in its place, a fight began in mid-air, and, discomforted, the smaller bird was forced back into the ranks.

J. G. MILLAIS, in his book *The Wildfowler in Scotland* tells a story of a white goose, the "Goose Queen" as he termed it, which came year after year to the Tay. There was an old man named McInnes, who used to live on the foreshore below Mugdrum Island, who coveted this white goose and strove to shoot it. For several seasons he was unsuccessful though, on occasion, he came very near to triumph. One evening, as McInnes was walking home along the sea bank, he heard the familiar cry of the geese coming in from the fields, and running as hard as he could, he managed to get under them as they came over the trees. The "Goose Queen" was there and McInnes fired his "piece," mortally wounding the snow-white bird. It managed to reach the water three or four hundred yards away but McInnes could see that it was mortally stricken. Ploughing across the ooze, he found his way barred by an impassable creek, and beyond it he saw his coveted prize begin to float away, lifeless, on the tide.

Only one chance remained. Farther down river was one of the stone groins mentioned earlier, and to this he made his way with all possible speed. When he reached the end of the slippery stones he saw the white spot of the dead goose passing wide of his vantage point. Unless he was prepared to swim he knew the bird would be lost.

He threw down his gun, cast his clothes on the dyke and, though an indifferent swimmer, set off in pursuit. Gradually he

gained upon the floating goose until, when he was within a few yards of it, he found himself floundering on a mud bank into which he quickly sank to his armpits. All thought of securing the "Goose Queen" was banished from his mind, the immediate problem now being to save his own miserable skin. The harder he struggled the deeper he sank and his only ray of hope was that the tide was ebbing. For three hours this unhappy man battled for his life until at last, in semi-darkness, he managed to drag himself out and crawl into the reed beds. Even now his troubles were not over for he was in such an exhausted state that it took him two hours to negotiate the tangled jungles. He just managed to reach a farm, half naked and half dead from exhaustion and exposure, an ordeal which would have been the end of any lesser man. This terrible experience made such an impression on McInnes that for several months afterwards he did not go near the river, and the memory of that awful night haunted him for the rest of his days.

About eight years ago I was lucky enough to see a similar albino goose which frequented the estuary for the greater part of the winter, flying out with the skeins at dawn and returning at night. The following season it again appeared and then was seen no more. Strange to say, the same year I saw a second albino goose on the Ross Links at Holy Island—it may well have been the identical bird.

THE most impressive sight of the wild geese is perhaps at evening when the "pinks" are returning to the sandbanks after their day's work. Here they come, in one long orderly V, wings set and gliding. They see the river from afar, bright in the last rays of the setting sun. It intoxicates them. A joyous babel breaks out and is as suddenly cut short. Each bird in the skein peels off as if at a signal from the leader. With half-closed wings they plummet downwards, side-slipping steeply, the wind murmuring and fluttering in their broad pinions.

Down they go, hurling themselves recklessly from side to side, to flatten out just above the sea in a glide which takes them to the exposed banks of sand. When all are at rest another outburst of rejoicing bursts forth, wild and unearthly in its beauty. Then silence, save for the faint rustle of wind in the reeds, and maybe a distant hollow rumble as a train crosses Tay Bridge.

POEM

AS much himself is he as Caliban
Is Caliban, or Ariel, Ariel.
I shook with jealousy to know a man
Can strut so boldly to his burial.

Loathing my piebald heart that strikes ambiguous
Chords in my breast,
I watched him spit the bright pips, as he stalked
Across the darkness like a golden beast.

MERVYN PEAKE

Theatre

ROBERT ATKINS

PUBLIC BENEFACTOR

BY HUBERT GRIFFITH

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM, by Shakespeare. (*Open Air Theatre, Regent's Park.*)

GLASS MENAGERIE by Tennessee Williams. (*Haymarket.*)

NO TREES IN THE STREET, by Ted Willis. (*St. James's.*)

CORN IN EGYPT, by Gordon Glennon. (*Boltons.*)

JONATHAN, by Alan Melville. (*Aldwych.*)

CRIME PASSIONNEL, by Jean-Paul Sartre. [*Garrick* (transferred).]

IT is ridiculous to talk about the weather, in England, in print, for by the time one's observations appear before the public the weather not only "may" have changed drastically, but almost certainly has.

Nevertheless, I date this article from a certain early week in August. In that time the gods were both kind and unkind to two sections of their votaries—unkind to those who had (or chose) to swelter in the closed-in theatres of Shaftesbury Avenue and the Strand; kind (for a change) to those who sought and found exquisite and immortal loveliness in "*A Midsummer Night's Dream*" in the Open Air Theatre in Regent's Park.

Believe me, this was no insignificant occasion. The Open Air Theatre, that has now been in existence for sixteen years in Regent's Park, lives only for (and by) such streaks of fortune as this.

When the skies are unkind, when:—

"The cataract from the walls of heaven
Goes blinding down the brink,
As if it should wash the stars away
As suds go down the sink,—"

then the players have to play in a tent, and the audience hurries for cover clasping damp mackintoshes.

When it is a pretty average English summer night, that is to say, that the audience sits with rugs and hot-water bottles to keep their teeth from chattering—the players have to play on the dank and naked ground, and risk rheumatism.

But there are times—rare times—when "nature sings in tune", when the London public can move in its thousands, from baking offices and sweltering flats to the freshness of Regent's Park, with definite relief and enjoyment, and can see a play, written with æthereal beauty, backgrounded by a setting of unearthly beauty.

I said " unearthly" beauty advisedly. It is true that the trees, the turf, the setting sun, the dusk and the birds homing to their nests over the heads of the players, are all things that link us with the primeval world—of the earth earthy—but added to them is a small touch of man's ingenuity, the discreet lighting of them up towards the middle of the evening by masked footlights and limelights. The effect of this simple trick is, in the purest sense of the world, magical, i.e. unearthly. Those who have never seen "*The Dream*" played in this combination of natural setting and subdued artificial lighting have never seen a sight that might have been dreamed of by visionaries of genius.

The lovely closing line spoken by the Duke:—

"Lovers, to bed. 'Tis almost fairy time!"

is superfluous. It has been fairy time from the first lighting of the lamps onward.

To descend from this evocation of what is the nearest thing to visual rapture that I have ever known in the European theatre, I have a practical proposition to make.

The company who take on this enormous risk, this fight against incalculable odds, the English climate—who have been built up through sixteen years to know and accept the fact that for many nights of the season they must play in a damp tent, that for many other nights they must play in the open in conditions that are barely endurable either for themselves or their audience, recompensed by the rare chance when they can give us an experience nowhere matched in

England—has been built up on the personality of one man, of Mr. Robert Atkins. For the many early years he got his funds from an altruistic believer in the theatre, from Mr. Sydney Carroll (and why Mr. Sydney Carroll's services in this direction were never recognized by the State with a knighthood I have never been able to discover).

During the war-years Mr. Atkins scratched round various municipalities, metropolitan and provincial, to keep some sort of open-air theatre company in being. To-day, at the age of approximately sixty, he is still playing Touchstone and Bottom in Regent's Park. Well though he is playing them, he is doing something more important still in still being the inspirer and trainer of his company. I do not think it unreasonable that the present Government, which believes, in the best sense, in entertainment for the people, and the highest source of honour Himself, should be invited to consider giving some sort of public honour to Mr. Atkins.

A shibboleth, you say? Not necessarily! I haven't the least idea if Mr. Atkins would be unduly excited by any such honour himself. But I do know that, after sixteen years, his company is still dressing in tents that let in the water when the heavens weep; that they walk to them along duckboards that in wet weather spurt up fountains of mud; and that their washing accommodation—not after all so far from Piccadilly Circus—is as primitive as a Boy Scout's camp-equipment in the wilderness.

Mr. Robert Atkins with some sort of Governmental recognition, even the most modest (for we are a race of snobs), would be in a better position to enforce his minimum demands for brick dressing-rooms and water-laid-on wash-bowls from whatever local authorities that see to these things. And that, I imagine, would of itself dignify the award in Mr. Robert Atkins' good-humoured eyes.

AFTER this practical digression, let us return to the matter of walled-in theatrical art.

I can't say that I have seen much of it lately. "*Glass Menagerie*" came to us with a flourish of trumpets from the other side of the Atlantic. Lest we should have missed this blurb on its dust-jacket (to revert to publishing phraseology), Miss Helen Hayes said something or other after its first-night about the American company regarding it as a "sacred trust" to bring so beautiful a play to our notice.

I am no authority on sacred trusts—because it is the claim of sanctity that begets blasphemy—so I will not dispute the point with Miss Hayes, who is an admirable actress. It seemed to me that the sentimentality of the mother-and-daughter relationship was 'teen-aged, likewise every sentiment expressed in its entire length, and that the production, under Mr. John Gielgud, was under-lighted and slow to the point of agony. But the New York critics apparently thought otherwise.

THERE have been a brace of plays on Biblical themes, "*Corn in Egypt*" (the Joseph legend), and "*Jonathan*" (the David-Bathsheba legend). Both use the Shaw idiom —"The lion in the arena?—Oh, he bolted him before you could say Balbus," and so forth without any impropriety. It is much better than saying, "Thou wilt meet me by the Gate of Antoninus," or than trying to redo the language of the Authorized Version. Both plays were amusing, and both might have been more so. Miss Coral Browne as Bathsheba looked, with her superb Roman profile, like the Empress Faustine drawn by Ingres, and reminded us what a fine actress she might be if anyone provided her with a part to match her ability.

"*No Trees in the Street*" is the sort of play of slum-life—of "social significance" shall we call it?—that is usually done, and done pretty badly, by Equity Theatre. I have no quarrel at all with plays having social significance. All masterpieces have. But this one was so puerile that I cannot see why even the ingenuous Miss Beatrix Lehmann (and the not-so-ingenuous Mr. Basil Dean) should have thought it worth bringing to London's leading theatre.

JEAN-PAUL Sartre's intelligent melodrama, "*Crime Passionnel*," has moved in from the Lyric, Hammersmith, to the Garrick, Charing Cross Road. Just because Mr. Roger Livesay was quite perfect in the

chief part, London mangerial arrangements, film-engagements or whatnot, have replaced him by Mr. Basil Sydney. But Mr. Sydney is also very fine, and I recommend a visit, with complete confidence, to one of the best plays in London.

ON the matter—frequently raised by actors—of why London critics in general devote so little consideration to the art of acting, of why the psychological implications of So-and-so's performance were not more adequately discussed, of why Miss —— —— in her third-act scene did not receive more generous recognition.

The answer, of course, is contained in a single word—"space". The large majority of dramatic critics for the daily papers and the evening papers work under almost fantastic limitations of news-print. A critic may be told, if he is lucky, that he can have as much as four hundred words for the discussion of a single play. Or he may be told that he can have two hundred—and even then write under the nightmare apprehension that half of what he says will be cut—Optional cut.

I had recently to give some lectures on Dramatic Criticism to the R.A.D.A., and to its more juvenile off-shoot, the admirably-run P.R.A.D.A. (Preliminary Royal Academy of Dramatic Art.) In each case the students had among them people who may be our future west-end stars.

For my own amusement, I set them a small task—that of trying their hands at writing a notice, of any play, which must be limited to 273 words. It could be less than 273 words, but it must not exceed 273 words. (This is common practice in journalism. I myself have often been asked to write a notice of "about 275 words, old boy", or maybe "225 words".)

The notice also had to include certain minimum and practical requirements:—the title of the play, the name of the author (or authors), the theatre at which it was running, the names of two or three of the leading actors, and an indication, only, of what it was about.

The little experiment bore its fruits. The intelligent students who went in for it found themselves "counting their words"—as all practising journalists have to do. They found that by the time they had mentioned the title of the play, possibly a long one, "*The Importance of Being Ernest*" and the like, the name of the author (sometimes a collaboration of two authors—which involves more wordage), the name of the theatre, the names of a couple of leading actors, of the producer, the theme of the play in barest outline, and a brief record of whether they thought the whole offering was worth the money or not —they had singularly little space left in which to discuss "the psychological implications" of So-and-so's performance, and why Miss Someone-else did or did not make the best of her third-act scene. In other words, the frank and smiling faces of the juveniles were—if no less frank—considerably less smiling after trying it; and they had learnt the elements of contemporary dramatic criticism.

Whereat I find myself at a loss, generous as my Editors are in the present journal, to describe quite how good the acting is in a new play, "*The Blue Room Mystery*," by Lajos Biro newly come to the New Lindsey Theatre.

The play itself is not important—it is about a vamped-up divorce prosecution, with the inevitable trial-scene, and several inconsistences and improbabilities.

But the acting of several of the minor characters is entirely first-rate:—the Butler of Mr. Morris Sweden with no more than a dozen lines to speak, and yet the creation of a character to be forged from them; of the Prosecuting Counsel, Mr. Donald Bissett, ferocious and ill-tempered without over stepping the bounds of the credible; of the General of Mr. Alexander Archdale, clipped of voice as of moustache; the Lady Caroline of Miss Jean Webster Brough, middle-aged gossip in the witness-box to her cross-examiner, "My good man let me tell *you* . . I have never committed adultery myself. But if you imagine that a woman in the space of half-an-hour, had walked seven miles out of one house, had committed adultery, and had walked seven miles back—all in the same half-hour—then I'll really have to give you a lesson in the facts of life . . . !"

A medium play—but what lovely acting!

LITERATURE AND CRITICISM

Edited by HUGH KINGSMILL

NAPOLEON PORTRAYED BY HIMSELF

DURING his exile at St. Helena Napoleon dictated his memoirs to the various members of his staff. An English translation of these disjointed fragments was published in 1823, but Mr. Somerset de Chair's edition* is the first coherent and consecutive version to appear in this country. Reviewing it when it came out a short time ago in a limited edition, Mr. Walter Elliott wrote: "Mr. de Chair has brought it off. There is no nonsense about this book. It contains Napoleon." It certainly does; for though Napoleon did not live to complete his account of his career (there is a large gap, from Marengo to the return from Elba), the value of the book as a revelation of Napoleon's character, and it has hardly any other value, would not have been enhanced had the pyramid of lies, humbug and fatuity been twice its present height.

In the opening chapter, which deals with Corsica, Napoleon makes no attempt to picture his father and mother, or even his brother Joseph, whom he loved in his early years before his feelings came to be entirely centred on himself. Corsica, whose beauty had moved him once, he describes in a style which would be reckoned flat in a guide-book, and it soon becomes clear that his only aim in troubling himself with Corsica at all is to present his relations with Paoli in an attractive light. He treats the great Corsican patriot tenderly and respectfully, merely hinting that in later years his judgment was beginning to fail; and he quotes Paoli's remark about himself: "You see that youth; he is a man for a Plutarch biography"—a remark the value of which Napoleon characteristically tries to heighten by representing Paoli as making it on a number of occasions. The many occasions on which Paoli, who knew London well, may have remarked that Napoleon was a man for the Newgate Calendar are not touched upon. "The Bonaparte family" Napoleon says at the end of the Corsican chapter "retired to Nice," which is true, but not the whole truth. Acting as an agent of the Jacobin government in Paris Napoleon had tried to displace Paoli, and his retirement to Nice was preceded by his ejection from Corsica.

While not stinting examples of the impression his flowering genius at Toulon and elsewhere made on soldiers and politicians alike, Napoleon is careful to insist that from the first his humanity was as striking as his brilliance. In 1793, he says, he wrote a pamphlet which worked powerfully towards calming the incoherent and frantic inhabitants of Marseilles, whom the men of blood were watching in the hope of a pretext for butchery; and two years later, when the Paris sections were threatening the Convention, it was his moderation, it seems, no less than his energy which recommended him to the frightened authorities as the right person to blow the insurgents to bits. Towards the close of the chapter dealing with this insurrection, he gives a paragraph to Josephine. "Everyone," he says, "knows the

* *Napoleon's Memoirs*. Edited by Somerset de Chair. Faber & Faber, 42*s*.

extreme grace of the Empress Josephine, and her sweet and attractive manners. The acquaintance soon became intimate and tender; and it was not long before we married." The fact that everyone, including the serfs to whom he was dictating his memoirs, also knew that Josephine was unfaithful to him from the beginning of their marriage till his return from Egypt did not suggest to Napoleon that he should either be candid about Josephine or leave her out altogether. The habit of issuing reassuring bulletins was second nature to him now, and so he tells us that when his wife set out to welcome him back from Egypt, she, through some misapprehension, took the wrong road—a reminiscence which could serve only to bring home to the great majority of his readers the overpowering attraction any road except the right one must on this occasion have had for Josephine.

Napoleon devotes several chapters to the Italian campaign, the enterprise which first drew the eyes of the world upon him. Told by other pens, it is a story full of drama and romance—the lean diminutive youth arriving to take command of the Army of Italy, subduing the swashbuckler Augereau with one glance of his piercing eyes, pouring from the Alps upon the rich plains of Italy with his ragged and starving troops, smashing army after army, capturing one famous city after another, and in the midst of all these triumphs devoured by passion and racked by jealousy. Told by Napoleon, it is a dust heap of dull details and duller bombast. Yet, in fairness to Napoleon, it must be admitted that his narrative is not conspicuously more dreary than the records of their own actions compiled by other great leaders, all alike being under the illusion that historically important events are interesting in themselves, without regard to the quality of the mind which narrates and interprets them. The only lively bits in his chronicle are his orders of the day, issued to his troops on the eve of battle. These are filled with the excitement of the impending encounter, and bear the same relation to his retrospective meanderings as a lover's endearments to the listless particularity of a pornographer.

There are two passages in the Italian portion of the memoirs which may be especially recommended to those unhappy persons who, in spite of constant admonitions from their better selves, still cling to the belief that the great Emperor belonged to a higher order of being than the great Duce, the great Führer and the great Comrade. The first is Napoleon's farewell address to the Italians in November, 1797—the farewell of a warder fingering the key of the cell. "We have given you liberty . . . Divided as you had been, and compelled to crouch under a tyrannical sway, you would not have acquired your liberty without assistance; but in a few years, should you be left to yourselves, no power on earth will be strong enough to deprive you of it. Until that period the Great Nation will protect you against the attacks of your neighbours. Its political system will be united with yours." In the second passage Napoleon denounces the Directory for looting the Italians in his absence—"The hand which had hitherto restrained the officers and agents of the army was no longer with them; the greatest robberies were committed in Rome; the Vatican was plundered of its furniture; pictures and curiosities were everywhere seized." That is on page 272. On page 162, in an order of the day, Napoleon reminds his army that they have "enriched the Museum of Paris with

300 masterpieces of the arts of ancient and modern Italy, which it has required thirty centuries to produce".

"The voice of the giant," to borrow a phrase from Mr. Somerset de Chair's introduction, occasionally gives utterance to general reflections, the most striking of which are to be found in the chapter entitled *Egypt : Religion*. Here we learn that Christianity borrowed the idea of one God from Socrates, and that the sophists of the school of Plato supplied the Fathers of the Church with all they required in the way of theology, including, apparently, the idea of hell; for Napoleon goes on to say that Christianity, with its hell, is a threat, and Mahometanism, with its houris, a promise. Jesus Christ, he adds, was sentenced to death by a mere praetor, whereas Mahomet became a king. In short to clarify and condense his reflections at this point, the prospect of houris makes better soldiers than the prospect of hell. How Napoleon would have fared at Waterloo, had his troops worn turbans and been drunk with bhang, who can say? Yet the precedent of the ten thousand Mahomedans who were repulsed at Arcot by Clive's modest contingent of Anglicans does not suggest that the experiment would have been much of a success.

A glance at the tributes Napoleon paid to his chief opponents will complete this outline of his character as displayed in these memoirs. A marine general, he says, requires nothing but experience and a knowledge of navigation, whereas war by land is an art of genius and inspiration, supported by a knowledge of many sciences. The marine general has no commissariat problems, he manœuvres on a liquid plain and has no reconnoitring to perform, his personal influence is confined to his own ship, and if he tries to direct the movements of his subordinates the smoke prevents the signals from being seen. So much for Nelson. Blücher at Waterloo violated the three great rules of war, and Wellington violated them, too, and all the others as well. In giving battle at Waterloo, Wellington acted against the interests of his country. But for the weather and Marshal Grouchy's unpredictable conduct, he would have been totally destroyed, and even as it was he would have made off, had the way to safety not been blocked by the forest of Soignes. "So, in the event—oh, strange irony of human affairs!—the bad choice of his battlefield, which made all retreat impossible, was the cause of his success!"

Looking back over that fatal day, Napoleon rises above personal regrets, and his last word is a cry of anguish as his heart goes out to the people of London in their dark hour. One can imagine their attitude, he exclaims, at the moment when they learnt of the catastrophe which had befallen their army, and that their best blood had been shed in the cause of Kings against peoples, of privilege against equality, of oligarchs against liberals, of the principles of the Holy Alliance against the Sovereignty of the People.

HUGH KINGSMILL.

CRISIS OF FEDERALISM IN AMERICA 1847-1857

By HERBERT AGAR

IN 1847 the United States conquered from Mexico an empire of land. It was done in the name of Manifest Destiny, which is perhaps as good an excuse as any for taking your neighbour's property. Yet two of the greatest Americans, who had never been known to agree on anything else, predicted that the war of expansion would bring woe. "Mexico will poison us," said Ralph Waldo Emerson of Massachusetts, the enemy of slavery and of the southern view of life. And John Caldwell Calhoun of South Carolina, the political hero of the slave states, concurred. "Mexico is to us the forbidden fruit," he told the United States Senate in an attempt to prevent the war. "The penalty of eating it would be to subject our institutions to political death."

The Southerners ignored the advice of their hero. They went ahead with the conquest.* Ten years later sectional quarrels, which began over the disposition of the conquered lands, brought the nation to the verge of civil war. The world's first experiment with a vast federal republic seemed close to failure. The causes of the collapse may be of interest at a time when federalism is urged upon Western Europe. We should be thankful, therefore, that Professor Allan Nevins has published a substantial study of America from 1847 to 1857.† His first volume has the sub-title "Fruits of Manifest Destiny", and his second "A House Dividing". By 1861 the house had divided; the guns at Fort Sumter had begun the long, distressful carnage.

All the elements which make American politics (and political parties) hard to understand, and unlike the politics and parties of Europe, are displayed during these ten years. No one is better equipped to tell the tale than Allan Nevins. He is the most judicious of American historians and among the most learned. But he writes for an American audience. He assumes a knowledge not only of the nation's history before 1847 but of the unique political system which has grown up in the United States. Since the latter knowledge may be described as scarce in England, it will perhaps be useful to sketch a background for this important book.

IN 1788, when the citizens of the thirteen new states (lately freed from the empire) were furiously debating whether to accept the present federal Constitution, young De Witt Clinton of New York composed a prayer for all those who feared and fought the plan: "From the insolence of great men —from the tyranny of the rich—from the unfeeling rapacity of the excise-men and tax-gatherers—from the misery of despotism —from the expense of supporting standing armies, navies, placemen, sinecures, federal cities, senators, presidents, and a long train of etceteras. Good Lord deliver us."

There speaks the deep American distaste for government, the belief that it is evil and that it must be kept weak. No one who cannot understand this belief, will fathom American politics, past or present.

The proposed Constitution of 1788 (the Constitution under which America now operates) seemed weak enough to its friends —too weak for safety in the opinion of many. The governments of the thirteen states were left with all the powers which would normally concern "the lives, liberties and properties of the people", while the powers permitted to the Union were sharply divided between the executive, the legislature and the judiciary—in the belief that they would check each other and prevent rash or oppressive deeds. Everything possible seemed to have been done to keep the federal government from acting—or at least to make sure that action must be so cumbersome and slow that it would only be attempted when essential. Yet behind this modest proposal Clinton and his friends saw threats of insolence, rapacity, misery, needless expense, and all the corruptions of history. A constant factor in American life is the fear of Leviathan, of the encroaching state.

We can trace this fear from colonial days, and we can trace the forces which have nevertheless caused Leviathan to grow

*In the treaty of peace Mexico recognized that Texas had been annexed to the Union, and ceded a territory larger than France and Germany combined, including the present states of California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico and parts of Colorado and Wyoming. A few months later gold was discovered in California.

†*Ordeal of the Union.* By Allan Nevins. Two volumes. Pp. 593 and 590. Scribners. 50s.

steadily more ponderous. War and industrial revolution promote strong government. Foreign dangers, business depression, sectional or class strife—whenever these are acute even the American people tend to look to central power for help. Yet they have never abandoned hope that life might some time become tranquil and that government might become frugal and unassuming, as Jefferson promised. Perhaps for this reason they have never seriously altered the terms of the Constitution which seemed to many of those who wrote it to err on the side of weakness, to put the liberties of the citizen before the safety of the commonwealth. Yet by unwritten and sometimes unacknowledged means that Constitution has been given force and flexibility to meet the troubles and confusions of a hundred and sixty years. It is the unwritten features of the Constitution which are so little known abroad; yet they make one of the most interesting forms of government the world has seen. The written Constitution, though revered and sanctified, is a bit stiff in the joints for this perilous world. It is the unwritten constitution which makes the written one work.

THE written Constitution has been unofficially revised, without the change of a word or a comma, in several ways. First, the government which had been planned as an oligarchy was twisted into a democracy. This could be done by only a slight straining and stretching of the document.

Second, the office of the presidency was captured by the new democracy—much to the surprise of the Constitution-makers, who thought they had put it beyond the clutches of what they called the "mob". The President thus became the one man elected by all the voters and representing the nation as a whole.* The members of the Senate and the House represent their own states and districts. It is not waywardness which makes them do this; it is the size of America and the necessities of a huge federal system. The representatives from Delaware do not and should not spend their time serving the interests of Idaho, about which they know little, since Idaho is further from Delaware than London from the Black Sea. It is the duty of the congressmen from Idaho to work for their own state. If the welfare of the national majority conflicts, the men from Idaho must still stand firm, seeking a tolerable compromise. If they should fail, and if the matter were of major importance in terms of money or of local passions, the federal bonds might wear thin. The first sixty years of American history gave repeated proof of that fact—and never more clearly than during the decade of which Professor Nevins writes.

Third, when the President became the voice of the people it became urgent that his voice have weight, that he be not for ever frustrated by the constitutional division of powers. In the years between Jefferson and Andrew Jackson (1809 to 1829) no President, could impose a national policy. The Congress would baulk him, except occasionally in foreign affairs; yet the Congress was "a scuffle of local interests" and could maintain no steady course of its own. So the nation drifted: in and out of war with England, in and out of depression, in and out of sectional strife. Thus came the demand for the third unwritten change, which gave the system coherence and saved it from stalling: the creation of the national party machines.

These parties are unique. They cannot be compared to the parties of other nations. They serve a new purpose in a new way. Unforseen and unwanted by the founders of the Republic, they form the heart of the unwritten constitution and safeguard the federal union. They give to a strong and popular President an instrument by which he can control Congress, reassembling the powers which the Fathers sundered. Yet they remain an aggregation of state, county, and municipal parties, each element clinging to its local pride and prejudice. So even the party machine is a loose alliance, a federal union, a guard against the centralizing pull of power. The party, if united, can help the President to make policy and compel congressional assent; but it will not be united unless the President woos and pleases all (or nearly all) its constituent parts. The policy it helps him make must therefore be a highest common denominator, a federal compromise.

A skilful President may pretend to rule his party and to get what he wants; in fact, he must often be glad to want what he gets. For the lords of the state and city machines can only be driven when they need the President's help for their local candidates.

*Except the Vice-President, who scarcely counts unless the President dies.

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They live by local victories, not national. In many states they prosper even if the national party is out of office for twenty years—which explains the southern Democrats to-day, who would rather destroy Mr. Truman than compromise on the Negro.

The centrifugal forces in American life, and the distaste for government, are so strong that nothing could weld the state parties together except the lust for power. They coalesce, therefore, not to serve a political theory but to win jobs—which is why they coalesce into two parties and no more.* For the party in power, if astutely led, can build such an alliance of interests that it can only be upset by an alliance of all the interests which are excluded. A successful opposition must be so flexible, so uncommitted to dogmas or to programmes, that it can welcome any convert, whether he be moved by indignation or by the hope for preferment.

The Whig party,† for example, whose death agonies are recorded in Professor Nevins' book, was a typical collection of local prejudices. It began with the followers of Henry Clay and John Quincy Adams, who wanted high tariffs and federal financing for roads and canals; but in order to oust the Democratic party it had to woo every group which disliked President Andrew Jackson. Some groups, like the eastern financial interests, disliked Jackson because they thought he was a tyrant; some, like the coastal cotton planters, disliked him because they thought he was a democrat; some, like the state rights Virginians, thought he was too much of a nationalist; some believed that he had destroyed sound money, and others that he had made the currency too rigid. Little by little, out of all these fears, the Whig party grew. Each time it won a new set of allies it had to say less about its policies for fear of losing the old allies. If the men who preferred a fluctuating currency were to be kept in the same fold with the men who preferred a steady currency, the less said about the money problem the better. And if the men who disliked the President because he was making himself a dictator were to work happily with the men who disliked him because he believed in democracy, the less said about theories of government the better. In the end there was not much to discuss—which may explain why political conventions are given to singing.

IT may now be clear why American parties are not Left, or Right, or Centre—but all three, depending on the part of the country. The Democrats are as conservative in Mississippi as the Republicans in Pennsylvania, and the Republicans are as "radical" in Wisconsin as the Democrats in California. (No major American party can be truly radical, any more than a common denominator can be immoderate.) Diplomacy, compromise, deference to regional bias, these are the daily needs of politics in a nation so huge that if transplated it would stretch from London to the Ural Mountains and from Sweden to the Sahara. The local groups which compose a party may be as extreme as they like in their own districts; but when they join with other local groups to seek power at the federal capital they must leave their inflexibility at home.

No party which hopes to elect a president can stand for anything more daring than a compromise among the clashing interests of the continent. It is the essence of federalism that majority rule must be softened and minorities given a suspensive veto—at least if the minorities can control the party machinery in a state or region. Silver Senators or Wool Senators or Labour Senators or Southern white - supremacy Senators may have to be placated before a Bill desired by most of the voters can pass. If they were not placated, if they were merely overridden by the will of a distant populace, the federal structure might begin to break. Europeans grow impatient with the delays and the irresponsibility of the American system; yet they seem to like some of its results, and they talk of trying a similar system themselves. If they do, they will find that they cannot have the benefits of federal union without the maddening delays, the maddening concessions to stubborn minorities, and the everlasting compromise.

They will also find that the basic problems of federalism can never be solved. They can only be allayed. In a federal union the central government has certain clear powers and the local governments, or states, have certain clear powers; but there must remain a shadowy and ill-defined borderland between the two. An aggressive majority,

*The interesting but subordinate *role* of so-called "third parties" is discussed below.

†One of the ancestors of the present Republican party.

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especially a majority of reformers, will be tempted to encroach on this borderland in the name of efficiency, saying that only the federal power can act with speed. But when such a majority makes laws which are felt to be hurtful by a region, the region will appeal to "state rights", will discover that the laws go beyond the bounds set for the central government, and will assert that it is therefore a duty to resist.

"State rights" is the last resort of a minority resisting the will of a distant majority. There can be no federal government without state rights, or with too much state rights; and no one can define what "too much" means. Only concessions, delay, forbearance, the willingness of a minority not to obstruct beyond the limits of human patience—only such fruits of political experience can make a large federal system work. Nothing is more fatal to federalism than the insistence on logic and definition, for it is not logical to seek to divide power, and it is not possible to define with clarity the areas of division. The problems of federalism cannot be resolved; but subtle, human, compromising, undogmatic, and boldly illogical political parties can sometimes allay them. This they have done in the United States since the end of the Civil War; this they will cease to do the day the reformers get their way and create parties which are clear and exclusive in their ideas, rigid in their principles, impatient in their desire to do good without delay.

IF it is the purpose of the two major parties in America to reassemble the scattered limbs of government and at the same time to insure concessions to regional and class demands, it is the purpose of "third parties" to preach causes and adhere to creeds. There may be any number of "third parties" at a given election. They may help to educate the public and thus mould history; for if they succeed in making a cause popular it will usually be taken over, not by one of the major parties but by both.

The short-lived Populist party, for example, which did not have a hope of winning a national election, made a series of demands during the 1880's and 1890's which were later put into effect—some by the Republicans under Theodore Roosevelt and Taft, and some by the Democrats under Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt. The Populists had performed their useful task when they gave the country a chance to discuss such projects as collective bargaining, postal savings banks, anti-trust laws, the eight-hour day, federal regulation of freight rates, and a federal income tax. As soon as the ideas became acceptable in most of the major regions and among most of the major interest groups, the national parties put them into effect. Once again this shows that the two main parties should be thought of as machines for seizing power, for carrying on the public business, and for preserving the federal structure with all its subtleties and contradictions—not as groups of men banded together for a cause. The attempt to fit the Republicans and the Democrats into the pattern of English politics can lead to nothing but mental fatigue.

DURING the decade which is covered by Allan Nevins' book the unwritten constitution of the United States failed. After the death of Taylor in 1850 the next two Presidents were weak and could not give the leadership which was needed; the great congressional defenders of the Union were dead or dying; the parties were beginning to break on sectional lines, thus betraying their deepest obligation, which was to secure sectional compromise. And as Emerson and Calhoun had predicted the country was poisoned by the Mexican spoils—for with every new push towards the West the hatreds generated by slavery were renewed. In a static society, under a federal system, America might have continued indefinitely half slave and half free; but the old troubles boiled up viciously each time the North and the South brought their differing institutions to the same frontier.

The central theme of Professor Nevins' book is the famous Compromise of 1850. This was the last heroic effort to avoid disunion and war by the political methods and with the political means which have been here described. The Compromise appeared to succeed; it was celebrated throughout the land as a glorious victory; yet within a few years it broke—either because of the quality of the men who were left to work it, or because the moral issues which were coming to the fore could not be met by the old methods. If we knew which was the reason for failure, we might know how far to trust the federal device of government in man's present plight.

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TRIALS OF OSCAR WILDE. *Edited by H. Montgomery Hyde. Published by William Hodge & Company, Ltd.* 15*s. net.*

MR. MONTGOMERY HYDE has collected together for a volume in the admirable Notable British Trials Series the most interesting portions of the verbatim proceedings of the three trials in which Oscar Wilde was concerned. He contributes himself a long and informative introduction which, if it tends at times to attach perhaps undue importance to the highly unreliable testimony of Frank Harris, is still the most sensible and objective account of the legal aspect of these proceedings that has come my way.

It has always seemed to me curious that this fat, conceited, good-natured, and characteristically snobbish Irishman, with his black teeth and affected ways, who practically forced the authorities to convict him of particularly squalid indulgences in sexual perversion, should have subsequently been elevated into a sort of injured saint who sweetly suffered at the hands of a society incapable of understanding, or making allowances for, his sensitive artistic nature. Such a view, if it persists still, will scarcely survive Mr. Hyde's researches. It is clear now beyond any shadow of doubt that Wilde was guilty of the offences with which he was charged, and that, considering his habits, and his behaviour at his trials, he was treated with surprising consideration. His friends, it is true, with some exceptions, either deserted him or testified against him, but then they were, by and large, not very nice friends anyway. Mr. Hyde shows he received a scrupulously fair trial and was justly sentenced. His counsel, Sir Edward Clarke, only undertook to represent him because Wilde assured him on his word of honour that there was no truth in the allegations made by Queensberry. When he found that this was a lie, one among many, he continued to represent Wilde without any fee. Wilde's immense conceit led him, in the first place, to prosecute Queensberry for criminal libel, and, when that case broke down, to believe that still in some extraordinary way he could escape the legal consequences of his deplorable behaviour.

It was part of the Wilde myth that the court was dazzled by his brilliant repartee in his exchanges with Sir Edward Carson. In

the actual report of these exchanges it is difficult to find much brilliance, or even wit, though there is no lack of perjury. Probably it is the case that, in court as in drawing rooms, his manner of speaking, his curious physical presence and unquestioned geniality, made what reads now as rather jejune, seem sparkling. Nothing could be more squalid and generally unappetizing than the account which emerges of Wilde's relations with Taylor and the other homosexual pimps and prostitutes with whom he associated. Mr. Hyde manages, rightly, to maintain an attitude of impartiality and objectivity, but he has difficulty in finding much to redeem the unhappy story as it unfolds.

What is remarkable is not so much that Wilde should have engaged in these disagreeable practices, but that he should have been surprised when he was punished for so doing. The exaggerated respect for correct or conventional behaviour which came to be almost a disease in the Victorian Age produced an even more deplorable reaction—an exaggerated respect for whoever fell foul of society, whatever the circumstances or consequences. If it is true that the ultra respectable are often hypocrites and bores, it is even more true that the vicious are more often than not depressingly second-rate. Social outcasts have derived excessive advantage from the occasional saint or artist found among them. In general, as any prison or doss-house discloses, they are unedifying and unattractive.

It is true that on the Continent Wilde, like Byron and Galsworthy, has enjoyed a great vogue as a writer. At home, his perversion tends to be regarded as more interesting than his writings. If his plays are, from time to time, revived, and likely to go on being revived as period pieces, it is improbable that many will feel drawn to *The Soul of Man Under Socialism*, or *The Picture of Dorian Grey*, or the sentimental insincerity of *De Profundis*. Indeed, from the point of view of his posthumous fame, Wilde's conviction has proved his greatest asset. If he had not been a pervert who insisted on going to prison, he might well by now have been largely forgotten. As it is, his witticisms, such as they are, and whether they are his or not, continue to be repeated. As long as there are bookstalls by the Seine, and fat ladies with nothing to do by the Danube, and Tauchnitz editions on railway bookstalls, his Continental fame is secure.

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MURDER, BLESS IT. Nancy Spain. *Hutchinson.* 9*s.* 6*d.*

STRAIT IS THE GATE. Andre Gide, translated by Dorothy Bussy. *Secker and Warburg.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

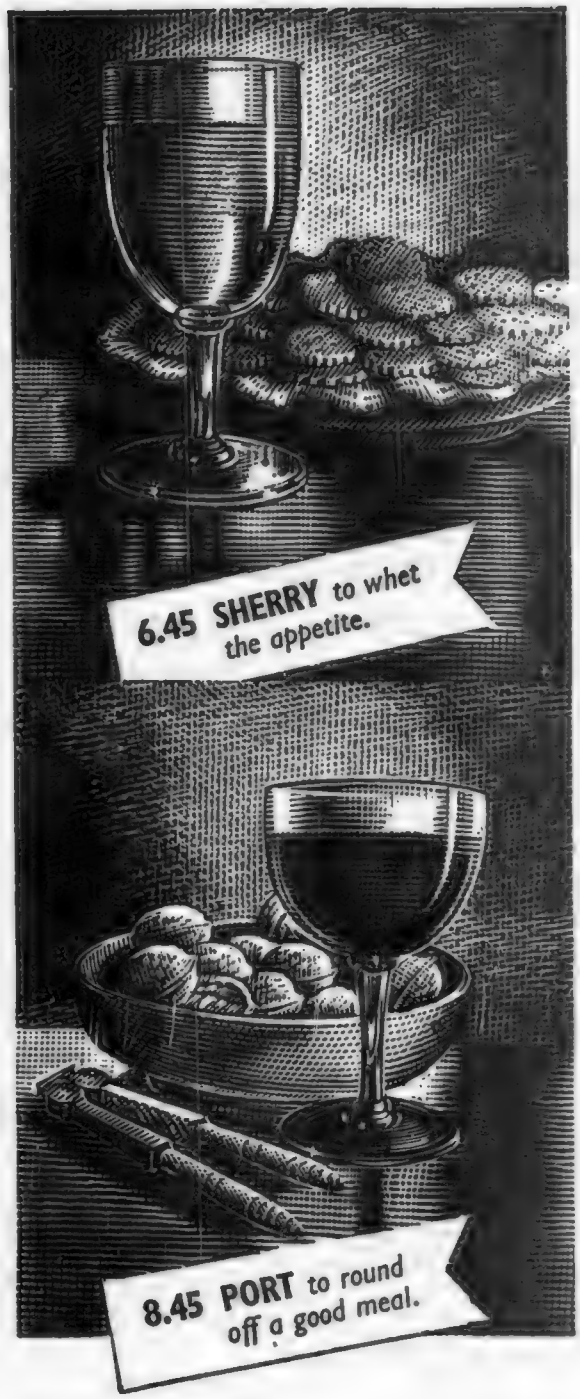
MISS RUMER GODDEN is a writer of great charm. Charm in novelists, as in women, is a temptation to illegitimate exploitation and when it is said that *A Candle to St. Jude* is about an ageing ballet dancer it is clear that the temptation will be considerable. The indomitable and capricious old lady in her tiny theatre, with the satellites who have succoured her during so many years, Miss Ilse the pious sister-in-law, Mr. Felix the accompanist, Zanny the cook, Miss Porteous the dressmaker, Lion and Caroline, the favourite pupils, Hilda French, the most gifted pupil, whom Madame cannot bring herself to like, Lollie the Cockney child who "had never seen the wind in a field of corn" but who is nevertheless in the apostolic succession of great dancers, they are all so charming, they fit into the picture almost too perfectly. Miss Godden, however, has something besides charm, she has style and perception, she knows exactly when to take her finger off a note. There have been a good many stories about the lives of ballet dancers, various in their technical knowledge and dramatic content. Miss Godden's seems to me to be just right in its romantic realism, its flashes of poetry and undertones of feeling, its portraits lightly but not superficially drawn. The plot, with the excitement of the last minute substitution of a new ballet in a gala performance for Madame's jubilee, with the score, scenery and costumes all to be found within twenty-four hours and even the principals, through rivalries and jealousies, in doubt, conveys the urgency of the theatre up to the point of climax, it is then very deftly slowed down to lyrical reverie. A graceful, accomplished trifle, theatrical in the best sense, but the writer

should beware of being seduced by her own power to charm.

As an observer of behaviour Mr. Frank Tilsley is, within his chosen limits, incomparable. *Champion Road* is an enormous book, but it has a plot that keeps moving. Like Priestley and Cronin, Tilsley has vigour and inventiveness: he is, however, a far more subtle portraitist than either. The chief character is Jonathan Briggs, first encountered as a none too honest newspaper boy in a Lancashire town, whose wet and dreary streets, momuments to the Industrial Revolution, rise up in their grimy brick before the reader's eye. Johnny is ambitious, energetic and astute, he is going to get on and he doesn't much mind how he does it. He becomes a bricklayer's labourer, gets his first capital in the mad cotton boom which shook Lancashire with an almost transatlantic frenzy of speculation after the first world war, and unlike many others, gets out in time and turns to speculative building. The story of his rise in the world, his business and financial wangles, his family life and love affairs, is told with a fidelity to life in every detail and what a wealth of detail there is. Jonathan Briggs is a first-class piece of character drawing, never once in the 692 pages does he act or speak out of character.

Contrasted with Johnny is his wife, Nellie. Johnny's integrity is patchy, Nellie's is absolute, she is the repository of all those Puritan virtues which are supposed to help men to success. She is a true Lancashire woman, sharp-tongued, energetic and unpretentious; faithful to the shining steel range, the brass knocker and the snowy doorstep, the Mission scruples and the Mission God. Nellie distrusts easy money and easy living, she acts continually as a brake on Johnny's social ambitions, she drives him to seek consolation elsewhere. In the end, however, only Nellie is left to stand by Johnny, her standards are vindicated with a triumphant pæan.

It is no reflection on Mr. Tilsley's portrait of Nellie to say that I don't believe it. That women like Nellie really help men is a convention of most popular novelists, in real life such women contribute largely to the inhabitants of Brixton Gaol. But Mr. Tilsley's whole-hearted identification with the *mœurs* of his characters is one of the secrets of his success, if he allowed himself a greater sophistication than theirs Johnny and Nellie would not be the vigorous, whole-textured creations that they are. *Champion Road* is a saga of ordinary people, what the



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Americans call "folks" and it has the realism and forthrightness of the best American novels of this type, although nothing could be more British than the temper and atmosphere of *Champion Road.*

POLICEMAN ON THE GREEN is even more typically British. You could transplant Johnny Briggs to Brooklyn, giving him a change of idiom, but you could not possibly imagine P.C. Quinney or P.C. Limbo away from Pitcher's Green. Ineradicably of our soil are these worthy constables, doing their duty with discretion, recording their experiences with tramps, poachers, delinquent boys and more serious criminals with sober humour. Few books have recorded the rural scene during the last few years with greater insight and fidelity.

MURDER, BLESS IT stresses in its title the writer's light-hearted approach to crime. Miss Nancy Spain's murderess is a psycho-neurotic with a mania for pushing men off heights.

I sympathized with her because I have myself a mild urge, so far controlled, to push women who sit on cliffs knitting into the sea.

There is very little mystery in this story and not much excitement, but there is a gaudy assortment of exotic types very neatly pinned down.

LAST comes the unmistakable masterpiece, Miss Dorothy Bussy's translation of Andre Gide's *La Porte Etroite.* Thirty-eight years have passed since it was written and the writer has since elaborately orchestrated the themes he plays so simply here. But in this exquisite short novel is the essential Gide, the puritan mistrusting his own sensuous appreciation, the man who has always sacrificed to deaf gods. There are few things in modern writing more beautiful and moving than this story of a boy's love frustrated, of a renunciation without fruit, here or hereafter. The grave beauty of the style has been rendered by Miss Dorothy Bussy as exactly as it can be done. This is the first volume of Messrs. Secker and Warburg's collected edition of Gide's work, the format is attractive and there is a very pleasant jacket, but I maintain that the title on the binding case runs the wrong way down the spine.

RUBY MILLAR

Short Notices

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By Gilbert Murray. Oxford University Press. 15s.

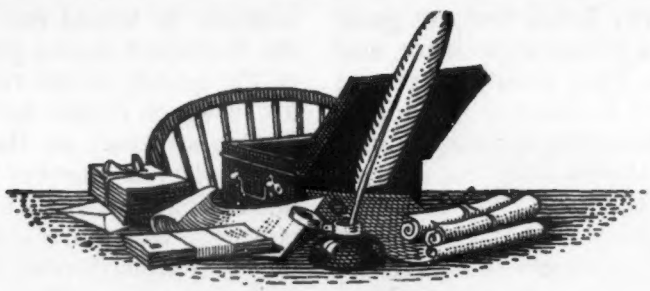
MR. GILBERT MURRAY'S voice is a voice from the past. It is a sincere and cultivated voice, saying wise things well, always just, always tolerant, moderate in its claims and in its criticisms. It is a distinguished voice, the voice of the great age of European Liberalism, and we may lament that it is a voice of the past, but of the past it is.

Gilbert Murray claims that Liberalism was blown down by the tempest of War. He makes this claim because he must. Liberalism is his faith and he holds it to be sufficient for salvation. He believes that Western Europe had reached a state of civilization higher than any ever known before under the inspiration of Liberalism, and that the great work of the enlightened ages was shattered by avoidable disaster. He argues his case with admirable calm and cogency. He denies that War was made inevitable by economic tension and, on this point, very neatly disposes of characteristically empty nonsense by Bernard Shaw. He also denies that War was both the result and the punishment of sin and religious infidelity, and it must be admitted that those who argue otherwise are sometimes guilty of a smug and superficial revivalism which deserves the correction of this placid and gentlemanly commentary.

Gilbert Murray rests his moral principles on the authority of the best thoughts of past and present times. But who is to decide what are the best thoughts? Gilbert Murray. Exercising the same sovereignty, others have made startlingly different selections, and others, again, have abandoned their sovereignty and given their eyes and teeth and morals and manners into the sacred trust of the State.

What is new and vicious in the modern world is not State sovereignty but the extension of that sovereignty over all the activities of private men. The uninhibited, sceptical, and restlessly enquiring mind has destroyed its own faith in the validity of its own conclusions. The intellectual nihilist is poles apart from the humane Liberal, but he is a product of the same principle of unlimited scepticism and enquiry. The good things to

Relief from an onerous duty



When asked to act as executor or trustee friends do not like to refuse and as a result are committed to undertake duties which often require considerable technical knowledge and prove to be more onerous than expected. The appointment of Lloyds Bank avoids this burden and secures, at a moderate cost, the services of experts without losing the human understanding expected from friends. Before making a will or creating a trust ask the Manager of any Branch of Lloyds Bank for particulars of the services of the Executor and Trustee Department.

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which Gilbert Murray holds fast are good indeed, but they are a private experience, and they are not enough. They limit the exercise of common sense. It is sensible of Gilbert Murray to suggest that there should be minimum protection for all prisoners, but it is not sensible to say that the protection could be enforced by public opinion. "Let it be known to the world which governments have refused to let their prisons be inspected. They will not long be able to endure that position of odium."

How does it happen that in a book which contains much that is nobly thought and nobly spoken there should come such a statement, which bears literally no reference at all to the world in which we live? It happens because Gilbert Murray's tradition does not allow him to believe in sin, and he is therefore unable to see human problems as they are.

COLM BROGAN.

SIDNEY KEYES

MINOS OF CRETE.

By Sidney Keyes. Plays and Stories edited with selections from his Note Book and Letters and some early unpublished Poems by Michael Meyer. Routledge. 10*s.* 6*d.*

THIS selection from the Remains of Sidney Keyes is an interesting contribution to literary history. He was so precocious and matured so fast that clues to his development are few, and anything is valuable which throws light upon his poetry. Apart, however, from the light it throws on the Collected Poems this miscellany has little intrinsic value.

Of the two plays *Minos of Crete* is the more ambitious and the less successful. Even with pages of the author's notes and elucidations it makes rather a blurred effect. One has the feeling that the play has suffered by the dramatist's avoidance of difficult decisions until too late; it is easier for a poet than for a dramatist to make up his own mind as he goes along. The audience for a play is more exacting than the audience for a poem and Keyes refused to meet its demands. The fierce independence of his lyrics demanded a compromise if he was to write plays. *Hosea*, a modern morality play, sticks to blues, spirituals, and the Old Testament in modern dress, a recipe with which you cannot go far wrong.

Sidney Keyes had always been interested in writing prose, and sometimes wondered whether he would end as a poet at all, but the five short stories printed here have none of the quality of his verse. Fiction is not an art in which it pays to be precocious. There is also an essay on the Artist in Society, which has a number of interesting ideas about literary history but no very novel conclusions, like other contributions to symposia in which promising writers of recent years have been asked for premature definitions of their position and surveys of their own minds.

Much the most interesting part of this volume is his "Notebook, 1942-43", which is concerned with the raw material of his poetry. Two short quotations will give some idea of its quality and range. "How far can I —or anyone else, because the phenomenon must be general—trust that sudden access of tenderness and pity, released abruptly inside us as if some conventional barrier had burst? . . . The lovers who can no longer see each other's faces; the children crying with tiredness but straining away from their beds; or the quiet people I have left behind in their lighted rooms, all become unbearably pitiful, and encroach on my own indifference until I feel their loneliness and insecurity with the force of self-pity." "For a fairly active person, it is odd how I hate *all* action, even towards my own desires. To me, every moment is a state of being *in itself*, not a way of transition into the next. So I can be satisfied with very little."

In an appendix are four early poems, the first written at the age of twelve years two months, astonishingly accomplished and "set". One sometimes wonders, as one does about all poets who die young, what further evolution could have been possible.

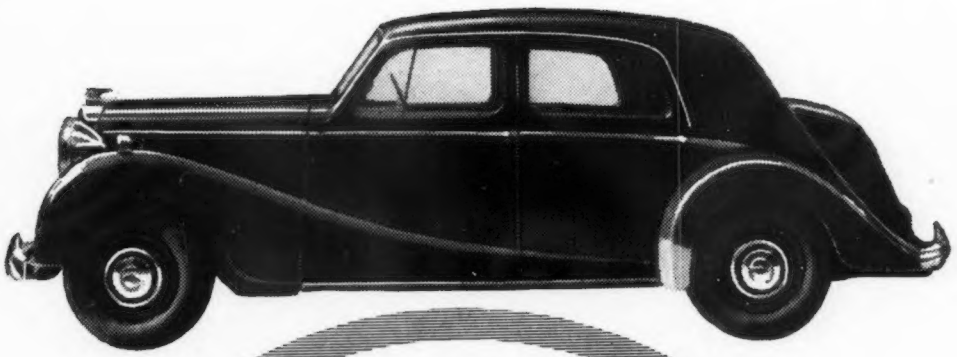
R. G. G. PRICE.

EMILY BRONTË

EMILY BRONTË: POEMS.

Selected with an introduction and notes by Philip Henderson. Lawson and Dunn. 7*s.* 6*d.*

THAT such an excellent selected edition of Emily Brontë's poems is now available is something to be thankful for. The only pity is that, as her output was so small, the edition is not complete, for Philip Henderson has done his work well. He has been at pains to obtain the most authentic texts of Emily Brontë's poems, and has not used the versions as revised by Charlotte. I suppose that Emily Brontë is, as her present editor claims,



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the greatest English woman poet. Women as poets, it seems, are lamentably inferior to men, and our psychology is plainly lacking in some important component of the poetic make-up. Women's poetry lacks universality in its highest imaginative forms. It is intensive, not extensive, passionately passive rather than creative. Nor does it seem to me to possess these qualities in a higher degree than poetry by scores of men. But passive intensity Emily Brontë certainly did possess in a high degree. A contemporary verdict on her, "She should have been a man," is clearly not true. Logical she was, and her mind had a precision that is strikingly exemplified; for example, in the accuracy with which she handled the complicated laws of inheritance involved in *Wuthering Heights*. But it is not in minute accuracy that women are intellectually inferior to men. Rather it is in creative imagination.

Philip Henderson has understood Emily Brontë very well, even to her shortcomings. Neither peasant nor gentry, the Brontës lived in Yorkshire but were not of it, being three parts Irish and the other part Cornish. Emily was too great to feel the need of the kind of emancipation that Charlotte strove after. She found her freedom within herself. Philip Henderson has well understood that her great power lay in her capacity for withdrawing into that inner, inviolable world.

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WILLIAM GERHARDI

'PENDING HEAVEN.' 'THE MEMOIRS OF SATAN.' 'RESURRECTION.'

By William Gerhardi. Macdonald. 7s. 6d. each

THE new additions to the Collected Edition of William Gerhardi were all first published between 1930 and 1934, and in atmosphere belong to the Personal, Post-War Twenties rather than to the Social, Pre-War Thirties. Churches, political parties, organizations of all kinds are bad: feelings and memories are good. The Family is an encumbrance, which, of course, is true if you think a pilgrimage should be solitary, and the worst horror of death is apparently removed when the afterlife becomes merely a state of remembering life on earth with all the hard bits left out.

"Pending Heaven" ends with a vision showing that, in death, the soul is free to do and be what it likes and to understand more fully the life behind it. Freedom and understanding come merely from the separation of soul and body. There is no expiation. There is no incentive to lead any particular kind of life: all that matters is the pure flavour of incidents, often at the time trivial, irrelevant, half-apprehended. "Resurrection", easily the best of these three books, works out this theory in some detail. In turn expository, malicious, autobiographical, metaphysical and nostalgic, it is always interesting and original and shows most of Mr. Gerhardi's extraordinary gifts in their maturity; but somehow they remain separate gifts—some lack of inner fire, self-discipline and self-judgment, seems to prevent anything he does from being a complete success. No man can go on spinning literature from his own bowels for ever, and when he turns away from his main interest, himself, he becomes uncertain, passages of considerable power and beauty often petering out into banality or rather childish malice. Always readable, sometimes breath-taking, frequently infuriating, he fits into no School. Time will have to do a good deal of winnowing, but I believe that something will remain.

R. G. G. PRICE.

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